THE

HISTORY OF ITALY.

THE

HISTORY OF ITALY,

FROM THE

FALL OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE,

COMMENCEMENT OF THE WARS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE BEGINNING, TO THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. A. D. 1400—1450.

PART I.

State of Italy at the Opening of the Fifteenth Century—Overwhelming Power of Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan—Continued Resistance of Florence to his Projects—Expedition of the Emperor Robert—Revolution in the Military System of Italy—School of Italian Generals—Discomfiture of the German Chivalry—Evacuation of Lombardy by the Emperor—Danger of Florence—Death of Gian Galeazzo—Dismemberment of the Milanese States—Restoration of the political Balance in Italy—Conquests of Francesco da Carrara, Lord of Padua—Hatred and Jealousy of the Venetians towards him—Their last War against him—Gallant Defence of Carrara—Fall of Padua to the Venetians—Murder of Francesco da Carrara and his Sons in the Prisons of Venice—Extinction of the Houses of Carrara and Scala—The Possessions of Venice extended to the Adige—Florence—Her iniquitous Purchase of the Signiory of Pisa—Resistance of the Pisans—Blockade of their City—Sufferings

and Fortitude of the Inhabitants—Subjugation of Pisa by Florence—Papal Affairs—Progress of the Great Schism—Successors of Urban VI.; Boniface IX., Innocent VII., Gregory XII. —Eager Desire of Europe for the Re-union of the Church—Benedict XIII., the Successor of Clement VII. at Avignon—His Efforts to prolong the Schism—Mutual Evasions of Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII.—Council of Pisa—Deposition of Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII.—Election of Alexander V.—Resistance of the deposed Pontiffs—The Schism rendered more desperate—Ladislaus, King of Naples—Insidiously interferes in the Affairs of Rome, and occupies that Capital and the Papal Territory—His ambitious Designs—War of Florence against him—Successes of the Republic—Ladislaus driven from Rome—New Expedition of Louis II. of Anjou against Naples—Battle of Rocca Secca—Defeat and Danger of Ladislaus—His final Triumph over Louis and Peace with his Enemies—His Treachery, Sack of Rome, and new Conquest of the Papal States—Power of Ladislaus—Italy in Danger of his universal Tyranny—His Death—Scandal excited in Europe by the Continuance of the Great Schism—Infamous Reputation of Pope John XXIII. the Successor of Alexander V.—The Emperor Sigismund—His laudable Efforts to give Peace to the Church—Council of Constance—Deposition of John XXIII.—Resignation of Gregory XII.—Deposition of Benedict XIII.—Election of Martin V.—Termination of the Great Schism of the Church—Affairs of Lombardy—Continued Anarchy in that Province after the Death of Gian Galeazzo—Giovanni Maria, Duke of Milan—His Atrocities and Assassination—Filippo Maria, Duke of Milan—Revival of the Milanese Power—Cruel Ingratitude of Filippo Maria to his Duchess—His Acquisition of the Signiory of Genoa, and Conquests in Lombardy—Encounter between the Milanese and Swiss—Battle of Arbedo—Grandeur of Filippo Maria.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

State of Italy at the open-

THE fifteenth century dawned heavily on the only Italian state which still enjoyed or merited the possession of freedom. Without allies and almost without hope, while the spirit of liberty was

every where expiring around her, Florence found herself the solitary champion of independence against the crafty and perfidious tyrant, who was eagerly watching the moment for her destruction. Already master of almost all Lombardy, the duke Gian Galeazzo of Milan had now entangled the republics of Tuscany in his snares; the preponderance of his power was hourly becoming more overwhelming and terrific; and having entirely encompassed Florence with fiefs and cities subjected to his dominion, he only awaited the first favorable occasion for undermining by fraud or razing by violence that last strong hold of Italian democracy. The Ghibelin chieftains of the Apennines, the republics of Pisa, Perugia, and Sienna, had all been inveigled, as if by a species of fascination, into the circle of his tyranny; and these powers, which even by their dissensions had hitherto preserved and balanced the safety of Tuscany, could now in their union under one master contribute only to the completion of the general slavery. Lucca, except Florence, was the sole Tuscan city in any degree independent of Gian Galeazzo; but she had just fallen under a domestic tyrant, Paolo Guinigi, who cultivated the alliance and protection of the duke.

ing of the fifteenth century.

Overwhelming power of Gian Galeazzo, duke of Milan.

1401

The condition of Italy generally was as little calculated to animate the courage of the Florentines, as that of their own province. The selfish oligarchy of Venice, in imaginary security within their lagunes, would make no effort to check the projects of the duke of Milan; Genoa herself no

longer free, was the subject of France; and, of the three signors of eastern Lombardy, Gonzaga lord of Mantua and the marquis of Este had sedulously reconciled themselves with the Milanese duke. In the interest of the Florentines there remained only the lord of Padua, less an ally from whom succours could be expected, than a faithful dependant who might himself need their protection. While such was the condition of Tuscany and northern Italy, the remainder of the peninsula presented an equally unpromising aspect. In the long train of disorders and civil wars from which Naples was but just emerging under young Ladislaus, that kingdom had almost ceased to be numbered in the political combinations of Italy. The papal power, too, had been reduced to a shadow by the great schism of the church; the ecclesiastical province of Romagna was as usual broken up into petty tyrannies; and its principal city, Bologna—the only interesting spot in this obscure division of the peninsula—was no longer the powerful republic who had lately ranged herself by the side of Florence against Milan. In the first year of the new century the fatal violence of faction threw Bologna into the power of one of her citizens who established himself in the signiory. This was Giovanni Bentivoglio, a name indebted to this revolution for the origin of its celebrity in Italy in later times. For it was part of the unhappy destiny of this country, that the greatness of her sons seemed to flow from the wounds which they inflicted on her bosom.

Continued resistance of Florence to his projects.

Even the consternation which filled Florence at the intelligence that, to crown all the defection which the cause of freedom had sustained, her ancient ally Bologna had passed away under a master from her republican government, could not subdue the resolution of the people and their rulers. They saw by the secret machinations of the duke of Milan, and even by his open aggression upon their frontiers, that the maintenance of peace with him was still impossible. They therefore laboured to prevent the new signor of Bologna from falling under his influence, by themselves concluding an alliance foreign to their principles with Bentivoglio; and they extended their negociations to discover beyond the Alps a source of aid which was denied to them in Italy. The situation of the empire at this moment favored their views. The electoral body had deposed the feeble Wenceslaus, and substituted in his place Robert elector-palatine. The German princes considered the creation of the duchy of Milan by Wenceslaus as an alienation of an imperial province; and, in raising Robert to the throne, they made it an article of their compact with him, that he should annul the investiture which his predecessor had sold to Gian Galeazzo. The Florentines therefore found little difficulty in inducing the new emperor to attack the duke of Milan; and a treaty was concluded between Robert and the wealthy republic by which he undertook, on receipt of large subsidies, to invade Lombardy and to strip Gian Galeazzo of his dominions. As the

CHAP. VI. PART I.

war was declared in the name of the empire, the whole force of the German confederation was summoned to swell the expedition. The preparations which the duke of Milan made for his defence were proportioned to the magnitude of the impending struggle. He levied an extraordinary contribution on his states; and with the immense resources which he thus collected, and by his personal influence with the condottieri, he assembled under his banners all the most famous captains of Italy with their bands. In this manner he drew together an army of above 13,000 cuirassiers, with 12,000 infantry. The emperor Robert on his part, though the contingents of the German feudatories did not amount to above half of their stipulated force, mustered 15,000 cuirassiers besides infantry; and entering Italy with this army, he was immediately joined by the lord of Padua.

Expedition of the emperor Robert. 1401

Revolution in the military system of Italy.

This invasion which was attended with such imposing circumstances, and which appeared to anxious expectation destined to change the political condition of the peninsula, by a strange caprice of fortune produced only a single skirmish. But this partial affair of arms had in itself consequences which, however unlooked for and contrary to vulgar anticipation, held no unimportant influence upon the subsequent fate of Italy for nearly one hundred years. I have formerly noticed the infatuation by which the Italians of the fourteenth century voluntarily yielded to strangers a superiority in martial reputation; and we have seen the long course of degradation and shame

which was inflicted on their country by the exclusive employment of foreign mercenaries, and the unresisted ravages of foreign companies of adventure. Thus, although a few native captains and soldiers of fortune were still to be found thinly scattered among those mercenary bands which fought the battles of the Italian states, the profession of arms was almost wholly abandoned to German, French, and English adventurers, led by captains of their own nations. But before the death of Sir John Hawkwood, the most celebrated and the last of the foreign condottieri, a revolution had silently been prepared in the military system of Italy. In the year 1379, Alberic di Barbiano, a petty Romagnol chieftain, formed under the auspices of St. George a band, composed exclusively of Italians, which successively passed under his orders into the stipendiary service of the different states of the peninsula. This company of St. George, which was ably disciplined by Barbiano, soon became distinguished for valour and military skill, and formed the favorite school into which the adventurous youth of the peninsula entered to learn the qualities of soldiership. Barbiano was himself an accomplished captain, but his fame has been eclipsed by that of more celebrated leaders, who emulated his example, or were formed in the school of St. George. Among his contemporaries, Jacopo del Verme, the faithful general of the duke of Milan, Carlo and Pandolfo Malatesti of Rimini, Ottobon Terzo, Facino Cane, and other Italian captains who had

School of Italian generals.

trained bodies of their countrymen, rivalled or surpassed him in reputation; and after his death we shall find the two most famous generals educated in the school of St. George, separating the military adventurers of Italy into opposite factions by a rivalry which continued through more than a single generation.

Notwithstanding the revival of military spirit among the Italians, a lingering prejudice that the native bands were unequal to resist the shock of Transalpine heavy cavalry still pervaded the peninsula, when the emperor Robert descended into the Milanese dominions with the gens-d'armerie of Germany. The army of Gian Galeazzo was composed entirely of Italians; and the timid duke gave a positive order to Jacopo del Verme, who commanded in chief for him amidst a galaxy of the ablest captains of Italy, to avoid the dangerous encounter with the German cuirassiers, and to protract the war by throwing his forces into the strong places of Lombardy. But Jacopo and his brother leaders had a more correct sentiment of their own talents and of the qualities of their bands. The German discipline had remained unchanged and unimproved for a century: the Italians, in resuming the career of arms and in exercising their ingenuity against each other, had exhausted all the resources of that inventive and intelligent spirit which belonged to their nation. They had wrought many advantageous alterations in the tactics, such as they were, of their age; their offensive weapons were wielded

with new dexterity, their armour was tempered to perfection, their horses were trained, bridled, and bitted with superior skill; and while armies were only masses of heavy cavalry, excellence in these minutiæ was sufficient to determine the balance of victory. Jacopo del Verme fearlessly threw his squadrons into contact with the German chivalry, and in the first skirmish near Brescia the invaders were routed. The duke of Austria and the burgrave of Nuremburg were unhorsed and captured, and the affair would have drawn on the discomfiture of the whole imperial army, if the lord of Padua had not covered its retreat with a body of Italian cuirassiers who served under his orders. The Germans were thrown by this check into a panic which was the greater from their previous confidence. The discovery of their inferiority, where they had calculated on easy victory, at once completely subdued their courage, and intimidated them from a second encounter; and the Italians, thus taught to despise their ancient masters, learnt also to discard the apprehension of danger from their future attacks. Until the close of the fifteenth century their sense of martial superiority remained unchanged from that hour.

Discomfiture of the German chivalry.

However flattering this trial of arms might have proved to the pride of Italy, if Italy had been united, it was calculated to increase the gloomy forebodings with which Florence had reason to regard the continued success of Gian Galeazzo. Notwithstanding the courageous resistance which the republic had hitherto opposed

CHAP. VI. PART I.

to his schemes of aggrandizement, his power seemed only to have been confirmed and extended by a vain resistance. After the last pecuniary sacrifices which Florence had cheerfully made to secure the alliance of the emperor and to enlist his cupidity in her cause, his assistance was at an end. A few days after the capture of the duke of Austria, Gian Galeazzo released his prisoner, and it was immediately evident that this act of apparent generosity was not without a sufficient motive. The duke of Austria, after sowing dissensions and distrust in the imperial camp, quitted the army and returned into Germany. His example was contagious where despondency had already succeeded to presumption, and Robert was compelled to retire to Padua and to disband the contingents of the empire. Thus weakened by the desertion of the greater part of his force, he only lingered in Padua with the hope of extorting new subsidies from the Florentines; but that people were weary of paying for services which were sure of never being performed. By the interested offices of the Venetians, who desired the continuance of the war against the duke of Milan, without choosing to contribute to it themselves, or daring openly to provoke the hostility of Gian Galeazzo, the Florentines were indeed persuaded to make one more advance of money to Robert; but finding this supply produce no efficient exertion, they refused farther issues; and the emperor at length withdrew into Germany.

Evacuation of Lombardy by the emperor. 1402

The whole weight of the war was now to descend upon the Florentines, and their territory was only preserved from being inundated by the Milanese armies, by a new enterprise which delayed the vengeance of Gian Galeazzo. With the design of possessing himself of the signiory of Bologna, he declared war against Giovanni Bentivoglio the tyrant of that city; and inducing the numerous Bolognese exiles to join his ranks, by the hope which he deceitfully held out to them, that he would restore their republic to freedom, he poured his troops into its territory. This attack obliged Bentivoglio to throw himself into the arms of the Florentines, and their forces were immediately sent to his protection. But their alliance could not avert his ruin; and his impatient presumption exposed the Florentine army to an overthrow at Casalecchio, where the Bolognese militia who detested his yoke refused to fight for him. He fled after his defeat to Bologna; the people rose in arms and delivered the gates to the Milanese troops and their own exiles; and Bentivoglio, after a desperate resistance, was secured, and murdered in prison by order of the Milanese general. It was then seen how well Gian Galeazzo designed to keep his promise to the Bolognese: the forms of their state were restored only that one of his creatures might propose him for signor; his cavalry rode the city; and the republican party were driven again into exile.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

Danger of Florence.

The fall of Bologna under her dangerous enemy entailed the last crisis in the fortunes of the Florentine republic. For ten years that free state had maintained an unequal struggle against the power and ambition of the duke of Milan; and had exhausted her strength and drained her resources by the repetition of unsuccessful efforts. She had no longer allies in the peninsula or hope of foreign succour; the whole circuit of her frontiers was enclosed by the dependencies of Milan; and Gian Galeazzo, instead of vigorously assailing her territory, stationed his troops with his usual art around it, to cut off all communication with the sea and with the other states of Italy. By this plan of blockade, he designed at a blow to paralyze the commerce of Florence, to leave the total languor of trade to work its silent and wasting effects, and to await the moment when the enfeebled republic should sink from exhaustion and internal decay. But just at the epoch when Gian Galeazzo seemed about to reach the consummation of his projects, when the prosperity of Florence was sapped at its foundations, and her people were plunged in despair, the days of the tyrant, as if Heaven had interposed for her relief, were already numbered to their close.

Death of Gian Galeazzo. 1402

Gian Galeazzo died suddenly of the pestilence at a castle to which he had retired to escape its contagion. Thus Florence was unexpectedly delivered; and a verse which was applied to the occasion echoed the public joy through her

streets, that the snare was broken and the captives freed.*

The death of Gian Galeazzo at once restored the balance of Italy which his successes had destroyed. He left a widow with two sons, Giovanni Maria and Filippo Maria, of whom the eldest was only thirteen years of age. Between these children his last testament divided his ample dominions, with the exception of Pisa and Cremona which he bequeathed to his natural son Gabriele Maria. The two young princes were committed by his will to the guardianship of the duchess-mother, assisted by a council of regency, of which several of the great captains of mercenaries were members. But if Gian Galeazzo, in leaving the most celebrated condottieri of Italy in the pay of his house, imagined that the fidelity to him which his vigilance and their fears had produced would be transferred to his children, this confidence was strangely opposed to his ordinary political sagacity and foresight, and miserably belied by the event. The tyrant was no sooner dead than the great states, which he had passed his life in enlarging by the dark alternation of perfidy and violence, were seized and rent into pieces by the rapacity and ambition of the men to whose protection he had consigned his boy-heirs.

There can be little to deserve attention or excite interest in the internal commotions of a despotism; and I shall rather relate the result of

* Il laccio è rotto e noi siam liberi.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

Dismemberment of the Milanese states.

the dismemberment of the Milanese states, than plunge the reader into a black chaos of rapine and violence and cruelties, of perjuries and treasons and murder. The duchess-mother—herself a Visconti and the daughter of Bernabo—was worthy of all her house. Mistaking ferocity for courage, wanton cruelty for masculine vigour, and atrocious perfidy for political skill, she excited universal resistance to her authority; and after provoking an insurrection of the Milanese, was finally seized in 1404 by the party which had usurped the name and authority of her eldest son, and poisoned in prison. In the general dispersion of the elements of government which Gian Galeazzo had established, many of the Lombard cities revolted from Milan; and without one aspiration after freedom, voluntarily surrendered themselves to the descendants of their ancient signors: the original order of petty tyrants whom the Visconti had long dispossessed of their power. Thus Cremona submitted to Ugolino Cavalcabo, Crema to the Benzoni, Placentia to the Scotti, Bergamo to the Suardi, Como to Franchino Rusca. Lodi passed under the dominion of an obscure plebeian; the Beccaria promised to recover their ancient influence in Pavia; and of the generals of Gian Galeazzo, Facino Cane seized the city of Alessandria, Ottobon Terzo occupied Parma, and Pandolfo Malatesta established himself in the signiory of Brescia.

The independent powers of Italy availed themselves of the general ruin which thus appeared to have overtaken the house of Visconti to aggran-

dize themselves at their expence. Thus Florence, who had been abandoned by all in the hour of her need, easily succeeded, when the danger was past, in forming a powerful confederacy to despoil the heirs of her ancient foe. But she at first procured few immediate advantages for herself. Pope Boniface IX. joined her in a league with the view of recovering the possessions of the church in Romagna; but he had no sooner received the cession of Bologna and Perugia, which gladly exchanged the Milanese tyranny for the milder form of papal government, than he concluded a separate peace with the Milanese regency. In Tuscany the efforts of the Florentines were incessant to restore freedom to the two republics which Gian Galeazzo had enslaved. With their support Sienna recovered her liberty; but Pisa was secured to the bastard Gabriele Maria of Visconti by the protection which that lord obtained in his new inheritance from the lieutenant who governed for the king of France at Genoa. Florence was compelled by the measures which the French governor adopted for confiscating her merchandize in the Genoese ports, to desist from further enterprises against the signor of Pisa; but she had, within two years after the death of Gian Galeazzo, already perfected the great end of her war against the Visconti. Her arms reduced the Ghibelin nobles of the Apennines, whose castles overhung her territory, to obedience and subjection; all Tuscany, except Pisa, was delivered from foreign influence;

Restoration of the political balance of Italy. 1404

Sienna was free; Bologna and Perugia were wrested from the Milanese yoke. These objects attained, Florence relaxed in her efforts: she indeed still supported those signors who, after the long proscription of the Guelf party in Lombardy, had now revived that faction in the cities under their dominion; but she ceased to act otherwise than as an auxiliary, and left the house of Visconti to struggle with the difficulties by which that family were now sufficiently oppressed. *

Conquests of Francesco da Carrara, lord of Padua.

Amidst the general dissolution of the Milanese power which had followed the death of Gian Galeazzo, the lord of Padua was too enterprising and ambitious, and had too many resentments to gratify against the house of his ancient oppressor, to remain a quiet spectator of the distractions and weakness of Lombardy. The duchess-mother of Milan had desired to obtain his alliance or neutrality by large cessions of territory; but the personal hatred which Jacopo del Verme and others in her council bore to Carrara, had occasioned the rupture of her negociations and the

* Poggio Bracciolini, Istor. Fiorent. b. iii. p. 280. ad fin. and b. iv. ad p. 294. Muratori, Annali, A.D. 1400—1404. I have laboured almost in despair to collect from my constant guide Muratori, and from Sismondi, cc. 56 and 58, materials for composing a view in any degree satisfactory of the confused and stormy period which immediately preceded and followed the death of Gian Galeazzo. The account, in the third book of Bracciolini, of the expedition of the emperor Robert, which effected such a revolution in the military reputation of Italy, is extremely interesting; but in political details the history of Bracciolini is not always sufficiently comprehensive for our purpose.

invasion of the Milanese states by the lord of Padua. After some indecisive hostilities, he was invited to undertake an attempt upon Verona. Guglielmo della Scala, son of the last signor of that house, whom Gian Galeazzo had driven from his dominions to close his days miserably, in exile and by poison, now trusted that the moment had arrived for the recovery of his inheritance. He knew that the people of Verona desired to return under the government of his family; he held a correspondence with his partizans in that city; and he induced Carrara, to whose kindness he had been indebted for a subsistence in exile, to aid him in surprising the place. The Paduan army suddenly appeared before Verona, the affection of the citizens seconded their attempt, and the walls were carried by escalade during the night. The eagle of the Scala * again rested on the towers of Verona, but amidst the rejoicings which welcomed him to the capital of his fathers, Guglielmo was already seized with a mortal disease. He was so weak that he could not sit on horseback to make his triumphal entry into the city; the fatigue of his inauguration increased his disorder; and he died within a few days. † The fall of Verona

* An eagle perched on a ladder (scala) was the device of their family:—a house which, in spite of its gloomy genealogy of crime, has some interesting associations for the Italian scholar, from the protection which Dante once found at the court of Verona.

† The lord of Padua did not escape suspicion of having administered a slow poison to him that he might make himself his heir; but the noble and

CHAP. VI. PART I.

seemed to the Milanese regency only a preparation for the conquest by the lord of Padua of all the cities beyond the Adige; he had already taken many castles and laid siege to Vicenza; and in the consciousness of the inability of their own weak and disturbed government to resist his progress, they applied themselves to alarm the jealousy and revive the slumbering hatred of the ancient enemies of his house.

Hatred and jealousy of the Venetians towards him.

The vindictive oligarchy of Venice had never forgiven the family of Carrara their share in the war of Chiozza, and the ingratitude which had preceded that contest; and though from temporizing policy they had indirectly aided Francesco Novello in recovering his throne from the duke of Milan, and had even allowed him formally to reconcile himself with them, they still regarded him with no feelings of amity. Thus, therefore, though they had made few efforts to check the wide-spreading power of Gian Galeazzo, which really threatened the total subversion of Italian independence, they were easily rouzed by their

generous character of Carrara should throw every discredit on the accusation, and Guglielmo is expressly declared by several contemporary writers to have died naturally of fever and dysentery. Besides, the guilt of Carrara would have been useless, as Scala left two sons whom the Paduan lord himself immediately invested in their father's possessions.

There can be no doubt that the frequency of crime in Italy in these ages has groundlessly multiplied similar accusations beyond all probability; for we scarcely read any instance of death in the palaces of her chieftains, which is not coupled with a charge of poison.

long-cherished hatred of Carrara to believe, or to feign to believe, that the projects of so skilful and warlike a prince must endanger the safety of their state. They were also perhaps prone to suspect that, under the veil of deference to the republic, he doubtless meditated revenge for the misfortunes into which she had plunged his father and himself fifteen years before. If the Venetian rulers had forgotten their habitual dislike and suspicion, Jacopo del Verme, who from his personal enmity to Carrara chose himself to appear before the senate with the Milanese embassy, would have instilled into that body distrust and dread of their enterprising neighbour; and he at least knew how to enlist the ambition of the doge and senate in the Milanese alliance. He offered in the name of the regency of Milan to cede to Venice all the country, of which Gian Galeazzo had possessed himself, to the eastward of the Adige.

Their last war against him.

Upon this condition, which at once, in blind hatred to Carrara, gave away to the republic the territory which the attacks of that lord merely endangered, the regency obtained the alliance of the Venetian senate. A governor from Venice immediately arrived at Vicenza; the banner of St. Mark was hung out from the walls; and a summons was sent to Francesco Terzo, the son of the Paduan signor, who commanded the besiegers, to desist from his attack upon a place which now belonged to the republic. The insolent demeanour of the herald who bore the message so exasperated the young chieftain, that he

caused or permitted him to be massacred in his presence; and though the elder Carrara himself attempted to preserve his peace with the senate by withdrawing his army from before Vicenza, his submission was vain; and the barbarous violation of the laws of warfare, which his son had authorized, was destined to be severely visited upon all his house. The senate were now resolved on his ruin; their intrigues seduced the youthful signors Della Scala from his alliance; and though Carrara punished their ingratitude by deposing them, the acquisition of the signiory of Verona, which he appropriated to himself, availed him little against the assaults of the puissant republic.

Venice, of all the states of Italy, had most to gain and least to lose from the habitual employment of mercenary troops in the continental wars of the peninsula. Frightful as were the results of this system to other powers, her peculiar situation protected her against the insolence and assaults of these lawless bands, and her commercial wealth gave her unbounded resources for their maintenance in her pay. It was an invariable rule of her cautious policy never to admit their dangerous presence within her lagunes; she was secure alike from the disastrous effects of their treasons and of their defeat; and she had every temptation to engage in a warfare in which she hazarded only her treasures. The troops which she now levied for the destruction of Carrara, were of more formidable numbers than had ever been assembled

in Lombardy. Her main army of nine thousand cuirassiers under celebrated condottieri was destined for the invasion of the Paduan territory; the lord of Mantua joined her alliance to operate against Verona; and Jacopo del Verme directed another numerous force towards the same quarter. Against all these assaults Carrara could oppose only his own unassisted resources; the marquis Nicholas of Este, his son-in-law and sole efficient ally, was compelled after a few useless efforts to leave him to his fate and to make his own peace; and Florence, now occupied only in the pursuit of an enterprise in Tuscany which disgraced her principles, turned a deaf ear to all the solicitations of her old and faithful confederate, and abandoned him, after a weak endeavour to mediate in his favor, to the fury of his merciless enemies. Yet Francesco da Carrara, with his two valiant sons, Francesco Terzo and Giacomo, defended the possessions of his house with a heroism and with talents which might have deserved a happier fortune. Skilfully fortifying the banks of the canals which intersected the low country of Padua, the signor himself with Francesco Terzo guarded this territory like a great fortress, and repulsed the general assaults of the invaders, while Giacomo threw himself into Verona. But the people of that city had no affection for the sway of the Carrara; they revolted, and yielded their signiory by treaty to the Venetians; and Giacomo, whose virtues they respected, and for whose liberty they stipulated, was immediately seized in

Gallant defence of Carrara.

1405

violation of the treaty, and consigned to the dungeons of Venice.

Meanwhile misfortune had thickened round the devoted heads of his father and brother. The first range of works which defended the Paduan confines was at length surprised during a violent tempest and carried by assault; a second line behind which the Carrara retired was opened to the invaders by treason; and after a desperate struggle, the Venetians penetrated to the foot of the walls of Padua, and formed the siege of that city. Here they were joined by the army to which Verona had fallen. Behind the ramparts of his capital, Carrara long maintained an unequal conflict against these united hosts, with a resolution which was well seconded by the courage and fidelity of his subjects. But the numerous peasantry, who had sought refuge within the walls with their cattle, fatally overcrowded the place; the confinement of so many men and animals in a narrow compass, together with bad diet and filth, produced their ordinary effects; and a frightful pestilence broke out, which is declared by an eye-witness to have destroyed forty thousand of the defenders. Amidst these horrors Carrara protracted his resistance above seventeen months, constantly deluded with cruel hopes of succour from Florence which were never fulfilled; and he capitulated at last only when the besiegers had gained one of the gates and forced a part of the city. The Venetian *proveditori*, or commissaries, who, according to the practice of their republic,

Fall of Padua to the Venetians.

attended her armies to control the military commanders, declared that they had no power to treat with the signor of Padua; but they invited him to deliver the city into their hands, and to proceed to negociate in person with the senate itself. Upon the faith of a safe conduct, Carrara and his son obeyed their counsel and embarked for Venice. On their arrival in that city they were admitted to an audience of the senate, and threw themselves on their knees before the doge to entreat the mercy of the republic. The doge, raising the suppliants, seated them on either side of his throne, and addressed a discourse to them in which he recounted the benefits that the republic had at former periods conferred on their house, and reproached them, but without bitterness, with the ingratitude by which they had repaid her. The Carrara replied only by imploring the clemency of the senate; and they were then conducted to the prisons of St. Mark, where they were suffered to see Giacomo, who since his captivity had remained in ignorance of their fate, and little expected to meet them in that abode of misery. The interview between these unhappy relatives could draw tears even from Venetian gaolers.

The implacable hatred of Jacopo del Verme pursued the noble captives to their last hour. While the senate seemed to hesitate on their fate, and had appointed a commission to determine the place of their confinement, he came to Venice, and startled the fears of the council of ten by the

CHAP. VI. PART I.

Murder of Francesco da Carrara and his sons in the prisons of Venice. 1406

emphatic declaration, that, for enemies so dangerous by their valour and restless talents, there was no secure prison but the tomb. This maxim was in perfect accordance with the atrocious policy of that body. They removed the case before their own tribunal, and the signor of Padua was suddenly desired by the mouth of a friar to prepare for death. After he had confessed, the priest left him, and two of the council of ten entered his prison, attended by a body of their myrmidons. The indignant prince, who acknowledged no submission to the state of Venice, met his end as fearlessly as he had lived: seizing a wooden stool, the only article of furniture in his dungeon, he rushed upon his murderers, and in the effort to sell his life dearly, was at last overpowered and strangled with the string of a cross-bow. The next day his two brave sons shared the same fate. "Francesco Novello da Carrara," says his biographer and friend, "was of middle stature and well proportioned, though somewhat inclined to corpulency. His complexion was dark, and his countenance rather severe; but his disposition was amiable and merciful, his mind enlightened, his acquirements various, his language elegant, and his courage heroic."

Extinction of the houses of Carrara and Scala.

These foul murders were, as it has been truly said, perfectly characteristic of the Venetian government, and would not have been avowedly perpetrated, even in the fifteenth century, by any other state in Europe; and they were followed by a proscription almost equally odious of the younger

children of Carrara, who had been placed by their father in safety at Florence, and of the youthful signors Della Scala. They at least had committed no offence against Venice, except that they demanded the restitution of Verona. But the republic dreaded their future hostility; they had been released by Carrara before his own captivity; and the senate now put a price upon their heads. The Della Scala escaped and separated, that they might elude the designs of their enemies, to wander in a long exile and to perish obscurely. Of the two remaining sons of Carrara, one died young a natural death at Florence, but the other, endeavouring thirty years later to recover his father's dominion over Padua, was seized in the abortive attempt and executed at Venice. Thus were extinguished two of the reigning houses of Italy; all their provinces—an extensive territory—had passed under the sceptre of Venice; and the lion of St. Mark was now planted from her lagunes to the Adige, on the towers of Treviso, Feltro, Belluno, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua.*

The possessions of Venice extended to the Adige.

Florence.

During the glorious defence of Padua by the ill fated Carrara, Florence might easily have effected their rescue, if she had remained true to that liberal and virtuous policy, which had constituted her the guardian of the weak against the tyranny of the oppressor; and which, in surveying the dark picture of these faithless and troubled times,

* Andrea Gataro, Storia Padovana, p. 867. ad fin. Sismondi, c. 59.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

still renders her the most interesting object in Italian history. But her citizens at this epoch suffered themselves to be engrossed by a project of selfish ambition, which broke down the line of separation between them and the tyrants of Italy. While their ancient ally the lord of Padua, was in his last extremity of distress, they neglected his moving supplications for aid, themselves to pursue their own schemes of vengeance and conquest. When Florence, in the first moment of joy at her deliverance by the death of Gian Galeazzo, laboured to overthrow the authority of the Visconti at Pisa, she was probably as sincere in desiring to restore freedom to that city, as she had proved herself in succouring the people of Sienna. But after Gabriele Maria Visconti, the lord of Pisa, had baffled her designs by committing himself to the protection of the marechal de Boucicault, who commanded for the French king at Genoa, her republican greediness of dominion was suddenly tempted by a secret overture from Boucicault, and her virtue was not proof against his offers. The marechal with difficulty maintained his master's authority over the restless Genoese; he stood in need of more powerful support than the bastard Visconti could afford; and he proposed to the Florentines to sell Pisa to them for 400,000 florins of gold and the promise of their alliance. Gabriele Maria was himself conscious of his inability to retain his power over Pisa; but he was fearful that Boucicault would usurp the price of his lordship, and he therefore himself entered

Her iniquitous purchase of the signiory of Pisa.
1405

into negociations with the Florentines. The Pisans were stung to madness, on discovering that they were about to be sold to their ancient and detested enemies the Florentines; they rose in arms; and driving Visconti from the city, compelled his troops to take refuge in the citadel. But there he maintained himself until he had closed his bargain, and, for 206,000 florins, transferred the signiory of Pisa to the Florentines: he then delivered into the hands of their commissioners the citadel itself and the other castles which he held. Gabriele Maria did not enjoy his reward: he was first plundered of a part of this money by Boucicault, and then of the remainder; and at last was executed at Genoa upon a calumnious charge of treason.

The Florentines shortly lost the citadel which they had purchased at so heavy a price. The Pisans, finding it delivered to a Florentine garrison, pressed the siege of it, which they had already undertaken from the side of their city, with increased vigour; and by the neglect or cowardice of its defenders, it was surprised and immediately razed to the ground. But this transient success only deferred and could not avert the subjugation of the Pisans. The Florentines were inflamed by the disgrace, which their arms had suffered, to obstinate resolution and powerful efforts. They haughtily repulsed an embassy which the Pisans sent to remonstrate on the injustice of their aggression, to demand the restitution of their castles, to offer to make good to Florence the sum

CHAP. VI. PART I.

which she had paid to Gabriele Maria, and to solicit an equitable peace. As if the iniquitous bargain which they had concluded with Visconti had power to abrogate the natural right of the Pisans to be free, they already addressed them as rebellious subjects; * and they immediately made earnest preparation for enforcing their obedience.

Resistance of the Pisans.

It was to no purpose that, to conciliate their enemies, the Pisans, who only asked to govern themselves, recalled to power the exiled faction of the Gambacorti, the partizans of Florence. The rulers and people of that state were not the less sternly resolved on their purpose. The direction of the war was entrusted to ten commissioners, as had become usual with the republic

* The answer which the Florentines returned to some propositions of the Pisans for peace, aped the tone of sovereign command, and displayed all the pride and insolence of these merchant tyrants. It was addressed " Agli anziani della nostra città di Pisa."—"To the elders (or magistrates) of *our* city of Pisa."

The conduct of the opposite parties of Florence on this occasion may serve for an example, among a thousand which history will furnish, of the little real connection between political divisions and abstract principles of right.—That the ambitious oligarchy of the Guelf faction, who swayed the counsels of the republic, should have few scruples in enslaving a neighbouring state, is intelligible enough; but it might surprise the political tyro that their opponents of the democratical party, the avowed champions of popular liberty in its widest extent, were perfectly agreed with them in this work of despotism. The voice of a few individuals who preached moderation was drowned in general clamour; and Gino Capponi, who was one of the ten commissioners of the war, and has left us an animated memoir of its progress, appears profoundly unconscious that he was an actor in a flagitious enterprise.

since her contest with the church in the preceding century; * and the numerous forces which these ministers had taken into pay were already in movement to close up every avenue to Pisa, and to starve that capital into a surrender, while the minor places in its territory were successively reduced by assault. A few galliots, which the Florentines armed at Genoa, appeared off the mouth of the Arno, to prevent the entrance of supplies from the sea; and so fallen was Pisa, that this petty force maintained the blockade of a city, which had once fitted out her hundred gallies to dispute the dominion of the waves. By land all hope of relief was gradually extinguished. The condottieri, whom the Pisans endeavoured to enrol in their service, were either bought off by gold, or successively intercepted and routed on their approach to the city; and the numerous army of the Florentines, drawing their chain of blockade more closely round the despairing city, at length prevented all introduction of food.

Blockade of their city.

Still the Pisans obstinately defended themselves as became men who fought for all that could dignify life; and even when fatigue and misery

Sufferings and fortitude of the inhabitants.

* These commissioners, who had originally been only eight in number, were soon increased to ten, and their body was renewed annually during the continuance of hostilities. The want of a more permanent council for the direction of military operations than the ordinary magistracies which were changed every two months, had occasioned the creation of this new branch of executive government; and notwithstanding the democratical jealousy of the Florentines, they confirmed those of "the ten of war" in office from year to year, whose ability was found to merit the public confidence.

and hunger had worn them to the bone, their spirit remained unsubdued. They vainly offered the signiory of their city to Ladislaus king of Naples, and to the duke of Burgundy: the first of these princes engaged to Florence to leave them to their fate, in exchange for the assurance that she would not oppose his occupation of Rome; the second proved too distant or too indifferent to afford them relief. The unhappy citizens, as famine wasted them, endeavoured to banish their useless mouths,—the women, the aged, and the children; but the Florentines mercilessly drove back these sufferers into the place, and had even the cruelty to use violence to them to deter their fellow citizens from a repetition of the attempt to expel them. Thus at last the Pisan granaries were completely emptied; and the wretchedness within the walls became so great, that the people eagerly devoured the weeds that grew in their streets and on the ramparts. But though the citizens with difficulty dragged their emaciated bodies to the post of duty, no word of surrender was heard among them; and when the Gambacorti who governed them, finding further resistance utterly hopeless, capitulated to the Florentines to secure as many advantages as possible for themselves, they were compelled to keep the negociation a secret from their fellow citizens. They delivered up a gate to the enemy during the night; the besieging army entered; and though the Florentine commissaries immediately introduced supplies of food, and obliged

Subjugation of Pisa by Florence. 1406

their mercenaries to observe a rare moderation towards the inhabitants, the last elevation of the popular voice in Pisa was to invoke curses on the rulers who had betrayed them.—This conquest of Pisa gave a secure maritime outlet to the Florentine commerce, which had hitherto been dependent on the caprice of neighbouring states; and the prosperity of Florence was thenceforth carried to its highest splendour. Yet in the dispassionate judgment of history, the unjust subjugation of a rival city, which had been but lately free as herself, has left an indelible reproach on her fair fame. The quiet submission of Pisa could be ensured only by the silent depopulation and mortal languor with which she was stricken in her slavery; her majestic edifices became a forsaken solitude; and the contemplative traveller who paces her deserted streets, will even at this hour call to mind the origin of her long decay, and deem the subsequent grandeur of Florence purchased something too dearly. *

Papal affairs.

Progress of the Great Schism.

Since the commencement of the great schism of the church, the papal power had fallen so deeply into contempt or oblivion, that I have scarcely found occasion to notice its precarious existence. But the repeated efforts which, at the period before us, were made to terminate the schism, and their approach to final success, may seem to demand our momentary retrospect and

* Poggio Bracciolini, b. iv. ad p. 305. Gino Capponi, Commentário del acquisito di Pisa, passim (In the eighteenth volume of Muratori's great collection.)

attention to the affairs of the pontificate. Urban VI., to whose intemperate conduct this great division of the church may with safety be ascribed, and whose subsequent reign was no otherwise marked than by ferocious tyranny over his own cardinals, and interference in the revolutions of Naples, terminated his restless life in 1389. The cardinals of his obedience immediately entered into conclave, and elected for his successor Boniface IX. This pontiff after passing many years of his reign under the protection of the Malatesti, lords of Rimini, and seeking to re-establish the papal authority over Romagna, by engaging in the obscure and eternal feuds of that province, was, as we have seen, in some measure enabled to raise the temporal power of his see by the acquisition of Bologna and Perugia after the death of Gian Galeazzo. Rome was also reduced to change her state of mingled independence and anarchy for subjection to his sway; and the severity of his government restrained the independent or turbulent spirit of the people. But, on his decease in 1404, the citizens rose in insurrection under the conduct of the Savelli and Colonna; and it was amidst a wild scene of popular tumult, that the conclave of the Urbanist cardinals raised one of their body to the papal throne by the title of Innocent VII.

Successors of Urban VI.; Boniface IX.

Innocent VII.

The new pope, who was distinguished by the moderation of his character, at first effected an accommodation with the people, and acknowledged their republican freedom. But the in-

trigues of some of their leaders, and the violence of his own family, produced new troubles; and Ladislaus, king of Naples, who by the secure establishment of his throne had now found leisure to form projects of foreign conquest, insidiously encouraged the Romans in their resistance to the pope, that, by forcing him to abandon the city, he might himself acquire a sovereignty over it. Innocent VII. was compelled to fly before the fury of the populace; and Ladislaus, by the invitation of the Colonna, then entered Rome with a small force and demanded the signiory of the people. But the citizens had not expelled their pacific sovereign to yield themselves to the yoke of an ambitious monarch. A quarrel between some of the populace and the Neapolitan soldiery swelled into a general engagement; the troops of Ladislaus were worsted; and the king was compelled to evacuate the city, after setting fire to it in several places. His enterprise taught the citizens to desire again the presence of the inoffensive pontiff; he was recalled, and shortly after died; and the election of a new pope, Gregory XII., at Rome prolonged the duration of the great schism.

Gregory XII. 1406

Eager desire of Europe for the reunion of the church.

For many years the general voice of Europe had been loudly declared, in reprobating the scandalous division which agitated the church. But the adherence of the leading states of Christendom was so equally balanced between the rival pontiffs of Rome and Avignon, that there appeared no other means of terminating the schism than by inducing both popes to abdicate, and obtain-

CHAP. VI. PART I.

ing a new and undisputed election by the union of the cardinals of the two parties. In the endeavour to effect these desirable objects, the court of France, and particularly the university of Paris, had honorably taken the lead. On the death of Clement VII. at Avignon in 1394, both the kings of France and Aragon, who had adhered to his party, seconded the exertions of the university of Paris in exhorting the Clementine cardinals to abstain from appointing a new pope. But these prelates could not be induced to make such a cession of their pretensions to the opposite faction. While they professed their most earnest desire for a reconciliation on equal terms, and went so far as individually to take a solemn oath to stop at no personal sacrifices, even to the abdication of the papal dignity in case it should devolve upon them, they hastened to assemble in conclave, and raised one of their number, Benedict XIII., to the tiara. Benedict who, until his elevation, had passed for the most moderate man of his party, and who from his previous zeal for the peace of the church had appeared best fitted for the work of re-union, had no sooner attained the pontifical dignity, than he laboured with ingenious duplicity to perpetuate the dissensions on which his authority rested. It was to no purpose that a French national council withdrew the kingdom from its spiritual allegiance to him; that a French army besieged Avignon; and that he was retained a prisoner in his palace. He repeatedly engaged to abdicate, and as often found

Benedict XIII., the successor of Clement VII. at Avignon.

His efforts to prolong the schism.

some pretext to retract his promise; and after ineffectually abstaining for some years from obedience to either of the rival popes, the French church found it expedient again to recognize the authority of Benedict, though his resignation was not the less importunately demanded.

Mutual evasions of Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII.

The hollow negociations into which, for the sake of appearances, Benedict XIII. was compelled to enter with the pontiffs of the opposite faction, at length however produced more impression than was desired by his crafty policy. Though the cardinals of the other obedience, after the death of Urban VI., had successively placed Boniface IX. Innocent VII. and Gregory XII. in his chair, they were obliged in decency, at the two last of these elections, to impose on themselves the same self-denying oaths in which the prelates of Avignon had set them the example. The increasing indignation of Europe, at the selfish obstinacy which prolonged the scandal of their separation, was so loudly proclaimed after the elevation of Gregory XII., that he found it necessary to invite Benedict XIII. to a mutual abdication for the peace of the church. But there was as little sincerity in his proposal, as in the apparent readiness of Benedict to accept it. The rival pontiffs agreed in rejecting the plan of the French monarch, that each should abdicate in presence of his own college, and that the cardinals of the two obediences should then meet to elect a new pope. Both Gregory and Benedict insisted upon a previous conference, in which their re-

nunciation should take place in presence of the united colleges. The maritime city of Savona in the Genoese territory was named for the scene of this ceremony by mutual consent, and formally yielded by the French king in equal portions for the residence of the two papal courts. But neither pontiff had any intention that the conference should ever take place. Gregory exposed himself by the first evasion, under pretence that, having no naval force, he could not trust himself in a maritime city in the power of his rival, who was escorted by the Genoese gallies; and Benedict, who for some time played his part with more address, not only arrived at the appointed rendezvous, but even made a feint of advancing from thence to meet Gregory, who had proceeded from Rome to Lucca. But it was no more than a feint; and a servant of Gregory compares the two pontiffs, the one to an aquatic creature who would not quit the coast, and the other to a terrestrial animal who dreaded the water. But the cardinals of the two obediences had been at last seriously rouzed by the reproaches of Christendom, and were weary of the mutual dissimulation of their masters. The majority of the followers of Gregory first forsook him, and repaired to Pisa; most of the opposite party withdrew from the residence of Benedict to Leghorn; the cardinals of Gregory joined them in that town; and the united colleges addressed circular letters, temperately exposing the conduct of Gregory and Benedict, to all the bishops of the two obe-

1407

1408

diences, and inviting the prelates to a general council at Pisa; where the two popes were likewise enjoined to appear before the assembled church of Christ.

Council of Pisa. 1409

Both the pontiffs, on the receipt of this summons, bared their selfish ambition to the world. Benedict, with three cardinals who adhered to him, set sail for Aragon; and Gregory, with four others, withdrew to the protection of the Malatesti of Rimini. The one convoked a council at Perpignan, the other at Ravenna; but these efforts to defeat the intention of the united colleges were unavailing. A numerous body of the prelates of Christendom assembled to meet the cardinals at Pisa, and most of the crowned heads of Europe sent their ambassadors to assist their deliberations. The council of Pisa, with impartial justice, solemnly deposed both Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII. without deciding on their relative pretensions, and raised the cardinal of Milan to the papal dignity by the title of Alexander V. The first act of the new pope was an endeavour to perfect the peace of the church. For tranquillity of conscience, all nominations to benefices, which had been granted by the rival pontiffs since the commencement of the schism, were confirmed, and all spiritual censures and excommunications annulled. Yet the council of Pisa, so far from healing the schism, only appeared to render it incurable. Spain obstinately maintained her adherence to Benedict XIII.;

Deposition of Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII.

Election of Alexander V.

Resistance of the deposed pontiffs.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

The schism rendered more desperate.

Naples and some minor states still supported Gregory XII.; and there were now three papal pretenders instead of two. But with the work of this council commenced nevertheless a new ecclesiastical æra: the right of the assembled church to depose her rulers had been asserted by a large majority of her representatives; a precedent was established to guide the subsequent and more important council of Constance; and many writers have seen in this epoch the commencement of that long struggle against the absolute dominion of the popedom, for which we are indebted to the final establishment of the Reformation.*

Ladislaus, king of Naples.

The adherence of Ladislaus, king of Naples, to Gregory XII., was occasioned solely by the interested design of prolonging the duration of the schism, and perpetuating the distractions of the papal states. We have formerly traced the character and fortunes of this ambitious monarch to the moment when, at the close of the fourteenth century, he had triumphed against his competitor, Louis of Anjou, and, on the retirement of that prince to Provence, had established his unresisted and arbitrary sway over the kingdom of Naples. From this epoch Ladislaus eagerly meditated schemes of new aggrandizement in the peninsula; but his attention was diverted for some years from Italian affairs, by a similar invitation to that

* Raynaldi, Annal. Eccles. vol. xvii. pp. 305—384. Lenfant, Histoire du Concile de Pise—passim.

which his father had received from a part of the Hungarian nobility, to ascend their throne. Sigismund, brother of the emperor Wenceslaus, who had been raised to the crown of Hungary by his marriage with the queen Maria, had disgusted the nobles by his debaucheries and cruelty. His person was seized, a general revolt spread through the kingdom, and, when the gallies of Ladislaus appeared on the coast of Dalmatia, Zara and other maritime cities acknowledged his authority. He received the crown of Hungary at Zara; but in the meantime Sigismund had recovered his liberty and the allegiance of the fickle palatines; and Ladislaus returning to Naples found it expedient, at the end of several years, to renounce his pretensions to the Hungarian crown. He sold the places which he held in maritime Dalmatia to the Venetians; who thus regained the possessions on those coasts, which their republic had, half a century before, been compelled to cede to Louis of Hungary.

insidiously interferes in the affairs of Rome,

Thus abandoning his transmarine conquests, Ladislaus turned, as we have observed, during the pontificate of Innocent VII., to mingle in the affairs of Rome, and insidiously to foment the troubles of the papal states. He had once failed in endeavouring to occupy the ecclesiastical capital; but the departure of Gregory XII., with the feigned purpose of meeting the rival pope, was too tempting an occasion of seizing upon Rome for Ladislaus to lose. In the year before the assembly of the council of Pisa, he advanced

CHAP. VI. PART I.

from the Neapolitan frontiers with a formidable army of 12,000 cuirassiers and an equal force of infantry. The Orsini betrayed to him one of the gates of Rome, as the Colonna had done before; the citizens were compelled to capitulate; Perugia was attacked at the same time and induced to surrender; and, under the pretence of acting as the protector of Gregory XII., Ladislaus effected the occupation of the capital and of great part of the ecclesiastical state. But he designed to extend his conquests yet farther; he hoped ultimately to embrace the whole of Italy in his dominion; and, in the magnitude of his ambition, which was as insatiable as his talents were splendid, he even aspired to the imperial crown. In the design to consolidate his power over his new conquests, and to extend his authority towards northern Italy, he imperiously required the Florentines to recognize him for legitimate sovereign of the ecclesiastical states; and he backed the demand by the imposing force of his fine army. But the Florentines had taken part with the council of Pisa, which they had suffered to assemble in their states, and with Alexander V.; they resolved to seat that pontiff in the patrimony of St. Peter; and the army of Ladislaus caused them little dread, since they knew that their gold could readily seduce the condottieri, of whose bands the Neapolitan forces were principally composed.*

And occupies that capital, and the papal territory.

His ambitious designs.

* When Ladislaus, in astonishment or contempt at the hardihood of the Florentines, who, at the time they deter-

War of Florence against him.

Having engaged the republic of Sienna in their alliance, the Florentines immediately began to levy a powerful force of mercenaries for the prosecution of the war, which had now become inevitable. The famous company of St. George served in the army of Ladislaus; but their leader Alberic di Barbiano, whom that monarch had created great constable of his kingdom, had lately died, and just before the epoch at which Ladislaus thus lost the services of this great restorer of the military reputation of Italy, he had been compelled, by the condition of the treaty which admitted him into Perugia, to dismiss from his pay a yet more celebrated leader, Braccio di Montone, who was a Perugian exile and had been educated to arms in the school of St. George. This captain willingly entered into the service of Florence; the republic farther took into her pay Malatesta di Pesaro and other condottieri with their bands; and before the king of Naples could commence his offensive operations, she had assembled two thousand four hundred lances, or seven thousand two hundred cuirassiers. Inferior as was this force to the army of Ladislaus, Braccio di Montone by his able conduct preserved the fortresses of the Florentines and Siennese from falling into the hands of that monarch; he hovered round the invaders, intercepted their

mined to oppose him, had only four hundred lances in their pay, asked their ambassador with what troops they meant to combat him: "With your own" was the laconic and audacious reply of the envoy.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

convoys, and routed their detachments; and in a short time so straitened their supplies of provisions, that Ladislaus was obliged to retire to Rome.

Successes of the republic.

The Florentines were not satisfied with this first success. While they were providing forces for the defence of their own territory, they had extended the ramifications of their policy with their customary address, and had invited into Italy Louis II. of Anjou, the former competitor of Ladislaus for the Neapolitan crown. They persuaded this prince to renew the pretensions which he founded on the adoption of his father by Joanna; they laboured to revive the Angevin party in Naples; and they induced pope Alexander V., on the arrival of Louis with a body of gens-d'armerie at Pisa, to bestow on him the investiture of that kingdom. The troops of Florence, Sienna, and Bologna, were united to the Provençal cavalry; and Louis entered at their head into the ecclesiastical states. Many of the towns in the patrimony of St. Peter immediately opened their gates to the combined army. Paolo Orsini, who commanded for Ladislaus at Rome with two thousand cuirassiers, was seduced by the gold of Florence; and passing into the pay of the republic, he admitted the allies into the castle of St. Angelo. The possession of Rome was then for some time contested between the combatants; and, although Louis left the army of the league to return to Provence, the Neapolitan troops were finally compelled to evacuate the capital.

Ladislaus driven from Rome. 1410

Alexander V. was thus established in the possession of the ancient seat of the papacy; but he survived the acquisition only a few months; and the cardinal Balthazar Cossa, a man of ambitious and profligate character, who had exercised a strong influence over the deliberations of the council of Pisa, and whose vices, real or exaggerated, have obtained a disgraceful celebrity in ecclesiastical annals, procured his own succession to the papal chair by the title of John XXIII.

New expedition of Louis II. of Anjou against Naples.

Meanwhile Louis of Anjou was preparing another expedition into Italy, in which the Florentines designed that he should carry his arms into the Neapolitan dominions. But during the fresh reverses which threatened the power of Ladislaus, he suddenly acquired a new ally. The Genoese, who had long endured the yoke of France with impatience, took advantage of the absence of their governor Boucicault to revolt; and after murdering, or expelling all the French who had remained in the city, they restored their republic, and immediately embraced the party of Ladislaus, in opposition to that of France and Anjou. In concert with the Neapolitan gallies, a Genoese squadron encountered the fleet in which Louis with a numerous train of Provençal knights had embarked for Italy, and captured many of his vessels; but the prince himself escaped; and his arrival at Rome was the signal for the advance of the formidable army which Florence, the pope, and Sienna had assembled in that capital. Many of the most celebrated condottieri of Italy served

CHAP. VI. PART I.

under the banners of this alliance: Braccio di Montone, Paolo Orsini, Angelo della Pergola, and Sforza Attendolo, an adventurer whose descendants were destined to assume a distinguished rank among the sovereigns of the peninsula. But owing to the dissensions of these captains, and the poverty or inactivity of Louis, the campaign against Ladislaus produced no decisive advantage; and the Florentines, finding the whole burthen of the war, which had already cost them immense sums, thrown upon their republic by the utter inability of her allies to meet its expences, listened to the overtures of Ladislaus.

1411

They concluded with him an advantageous peace, in which Sienna was embraced; while John XXIII. and Louis of Anjou continued the war.

Notwithstanding the defection of Florence and Sienna, the army of Louis of Anjou remained undiminished. Though the gold of the former republic was no longer lavished to gratify their rapacity, the condottieri and their bands preferred serving without pay, but with the prospect of booty, to a total loss of occupation; and the Angevin prince was enabled by their adherence to his fortunes to cross the Neapolitan frontiers at the head of twelve thousand of the bravest cuirassiers of Italy. Ladislaus waited his approach at a place called Rocca Secca, near the river Garigliano, with an army little inferior. But the assault, in which the Angevin prince led his troops, was so impetuous that the cavalry of Ladislaus was completely routed at the first onset:

Battle of Rocca Secca. Defeat and danger of Ladislaus.

almost all his barons were taken; and even his personal baggage fell into the hands of the conquerors. Their greediness of plunder and avarice of ransom saved the fugitive monarch from the fate of Manfred and Conradin. They were sacking his camp while they ought to have been pressing on his disorderly flight; the mercenary soldiers sold the prisoners their liberty and arms for a few ducats to procure a little money; and Ladislaus finding they did not pursue him, and learning their cupidity, put on a bold countenance. He sent heralds to their camp with supplies of gold, and in a few hours he had ransomed and remounted nearly his whole army. He afterwards declared that, on the first day after his defeat, his person and kingdom were alike in the power of the victors; that, on the second, though his person was saved, his kingdom was still at their mercy; but that, on the third, the fruits of their victory had flown. When Louis of Anjou at last prevailed on his mercenary bands to advance, all the defiles of the Neapolitan frontiers were already securely closed against them by the troops of Ladislaus. Want and sickness soon followed the inactivity to which the invaders were reduced; as the hope of further booty diminished, the mercenaries became ungovernable and mutinous; and Louis was obliged to re-conduct his army to Rome. There he, in weariness and disgust of his enterprise, abandoned it and left Italy for ever; and Ladislaus and John XXIII. alike exhausted by

His final triumph over Louis,

CHAP. VI. PART I.

the war, which languished without further circumstances of moment, concluded it in the following summer by the good offices of the Florentines.

and peace with his enemies. 1412

Ladislaus recognized the authority of the council of Pisa, and submitted to John XXIII. as legitimate pope; and John, in return, paid him 100,000 florins and confirmed to him the investiture of his kingdom.

His treachery.

The restless and ambitious character of Ladislaus rendered this reconciliation short-lived and ineffectual. Early in the following year, he commissioned Sforza, now in his service, to attack Paolo Orsini who had established himself in some fiefs of the march of Ancona. With the ostensible purpose of supporting his general in this expedition, which was undertaken with the secret concurrence of the pope, Ladislaus assembled a large army and passed the confines of his kingdom at its head. But on his passage through the ecclesiastical states, he suddenly turned off, and appeared at the gates of Rome; his gallies entered the Tiber; and John XXIII., in consternation at this unexpected treachery, had scarcely time to escape from his capital, when an entrance through its walls was betrayed to the troops of

Sack of Rome,

Ladislaus. The Neapolitan army entered; and during a sack of several days, Rome experienced all the horrors of barbarian warfare. The perfidious violation of the faith of treaties of which Ladislaus had thus been guilty, his acquisition of Rome, and still more his promise to his army that

a yet richer booty awaited them in the pillage of Florence, awakened against him the suspicions and fears of that republic. Her ten commissioners of war were immediately appointed, as if the state were already engaged in hostilities; several condottieri were taken into pay; and preparations were made to oppose the ambitious designs of Ladislaus on a scale proportioned to the power and activity of so dangerous an enemy. But still the Florentine government wished if possible to avoid provoking him to war; and, while they negociated and temporized, Ladislaus reduced the whole of the patrimony of St. Peter. John XXIII. was now engaged in ecclesiastical affairs which too deeply concerned the very existence of his authority, to leave him time for watching over the preservation of his temporal dominions.

And new conquest of the papal states.

While circumstances seemed to oblige the pope himself to abandon his charge, the Florentines either did not consider themselves bound to engage singly in the defence of the possessions of the church, or they felt their inability to wrest them from the strong arm of Ladislaus. They therefore, in concert with Sienna, signed a new peace with that monarch. But the apparent amity which dictated the treaty thinly veiled the alarming projects of Ladislaus, and the real distrust and suspicion of the republicans. That monarch was now in the zenith of his power: he had removed the northern boundary of his dominions to the confines of Tuscany; he numbered in his service fifteen thousand of the finest gens-

Power of Ladislaus. Italy in danger of his universal tyranny.

d'armerie of Italy; and the establishment of a general tyranny seemed at hand, more extensive and formidable than that with which Gian Galeazzo had threatened the peninsula. Florence in particular, had every thing to dread from a monarch whose power was almost at her gates, and who was at once warlike, ambitious, and unprincipled. But death, which had more than once before so opportunely succoured her, came again to her deliverance; and just as the measures of Ladislaus bore every indication of new aggressions and immediate war, he was suddenly hurried to the grave by a frightful and agonizing disease, the novel symptoms of which were supposed to have been occasioned by his excessive debaucheries. *

His death. 1414

Scandal excited in Europe by the continuance of the Great Schism.

The attention of Italy was divided between the change which the death of Ladislaus produced in the condition of a great part of the peninsula, and the approaching convocation of a general council. The anxious expectations of Europe had been completely disappointed by the issue of the council of Pisa. The scandal of the schism had rather been aggravated than repressed; three popes now claimed the obedience of Christendom; and all the disorders and corruptions of the clergy, which had shamefully increased during the long quarrel of the church, were multiplied anew with the number of pretenders to the papal dignity.

* Poggio Bracciolini, b. iv. pp. 305—316. Giannone, Istor. Civ. di Napoli, b. xxiv. cc. 6—8. pp. 371—405. Muratori, A.D. 1405—1414.

The simoniacal practices and venality of the divided papacy had forgotten concealment, and exceeded all bounds of decency. The malicious industry with which the organs of the adverse factions bared to the public gaze the vices of their opponents, and the venomous spirit with which they invented atrocious accusations or exaggerated crimes, destroyed every former illusion that had attracted to the Roman pontiffs the blind adoration of mankind. The public and personal character of John XXIII. in particular was assailed with the most odious charges. To provide funds for the war against Ladislaus, he had renewed the sale of indulgences which Boniface IX. had commenced; and the disgust with which this scandalous traffic filled all enlightened and religious minds, was converted into detestation of the pope himself by the assiduous report of his enormous depravity. One universal cry for ecclesiastical reform was raised throughout Europe, and a general council was still in public opinion the favorite remedy for the schism of the papacy and the flagrant abuses of the church.

Infamous reputation of pope John XXIII., the successor of Alexander V.

The wishes of Christendom were forwarded with active and disinterested zeal by a monarch, the ordinary qualities of whose character seemed little to promise any virtuous exertion. This was Sigismund of Hungary, who, on the death of the emperor Robert in the year 1410, had been raised to the crown of Germany: he was the brother of Wenceslaus, and that feeble monarch, who since his deposition from the imperial throne still

The emperor Sigismund.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

reigned over his hereditary states, himself gave him his electoral vote as king of Bohemia. Sigismund was habitually cruel and faithless, and, in his private life, debauched and voluptuous to the last degree. But, in the pursuit of a favorite design, he could evince a constancy and activity of purpose, which no fatigue could tire and no danger appal; and which, standing on the most famous occasion of his reign, in the place of virtue, has left to his memory a fairer reputation than is otherwise merited by the tenor of his life.

His laudable efforts to give peace to the church.

In receiving the imperial dignity, he formed the resolution of terminating the schism of the church; and he adhered to it with an inflexible and praiseworthy earnestness which was strangely contrasted with his general duplicity and selfishness. For some time after his elevation to the throne of the empire, a war in which he was involved with Venice, respecting the possession of the Dalmatian cities sold to her by Ladislaus, delayed the fulfilment of his eager desire both to accomplish his own coronation at Rome, and the assembly of a general council. But, after a lapse of three years, he at length succeeded in concluding a long truce with the Venetian republic, and he then immediately entered Lombardy. He did not find himself powerful enough to dictate in arms as a master to Italy; and he therefore confined his attention to the affairs of the church.

1413

John XXIII. both apprehended the reproach of Europe, if he should refuse to convoke a council, and was disturbed by the opposite fear of the

judgment which such a body might pass on himself. In his negociations with Sigismund, he dared not oppose its assembly, but he at first insisted that it should take place in some city of Italy. The emperor and the Germans on the other hand, who attributed the disorders of the church to the corruption of the Italian clergy, dreaded the influence which the papal court must exercise over any council held in the peninsula. They, and Europe in general, desired a free assembly to reform the church, as well as to restore its union; and John, after hesitating and betraying much irresolution, had at last the fatal imprudence for his own interests, to consent that a place beyond the Alps should be chosen for the seat of the council. The pope and the emperor then met in personal conferences in several of the Lombard cities to perfect the preliminary arrangements; and John XXIII. at length published his bulls to invite the clergy of Christendom to assemble in the imperial city of Constance.

Council of Constance. 1414

The famous council of Constance was attended by the emperor and by pope John XXIII. in person; by the ambassadors of almost all Christian princes and states; and, besides the cardinals in obedience to John, by so great a number of episcopal and inferior clergy and theologians of various nations, that the assembly might with reason arrogate to itself the pretension of representing the civil and ecclesiastical interests of Europe. But the proportion of Italians in the council far exceeded that of other nations; and it might justly

be dreaded that, if the suffrages were permitted to reckon by the head, the prelates and others of that country, who were almost universally in the papal interests, would exercise a pernicious influence upon the decisions of the assembled church. It was therefore determined, by the concert of the rest of the council, that the votes should be collected, not by the number of persons, but by nations. Thus four distinct chambers were formed (to which a fifth was afterwards added for Spain) for the Italian, German, French, and English nations; the minor states of Europe being comprehended under one or other of these great divisions. The national chambers deliberated separately upon every proposition; the decision of each body was given as a single voice; and the decrees of the council were regulated by the majority of these national votes.

The first labour of the council was to extinguish the schism, and there appeared no other mode of effecting this great object, than by obliging not only Benedict XIII. and Gregory XII., but John XXIII. also, to resign their pretensions. For, as Spain and a part of Italy rejected the authority of John to adhere to his rivals respectively, the sacrifice of his dignity could alone persuade his opponents to agree in a new choice of the same pope. And though the legitimacy of John's election was not disputed by the greater portion of Europe, the public report of his scandalous vices was readily adopted to justify his deposition. To the demand of the assembled

church, that the three papal rivals should equally abdicate their seats, John XXIII. was unwillingly reduced to promise compliance: but he seized the first opportunity of escaping from Constance, in the disguise of a groom; and, retiring to Schaffhausen, found a protector in the duke of Austria. But for the firmness of the emperor, this flight must have been followed by the dissolution of the council. But Sigismund immediately put the duke of Austria under the ban of the empire; all the petty princes and free cities of the neighbouring provinces united in attacking him; and the duke was shortly necessitated to submit to the emperor and the council, and to abandon the pope to his fate. John XXIII. was re-conducted a prisoner to Constance; a process was commenced against him by the council; and, upon loose and general evidence only, articles of accusation were framed against him, which embraced a longer series of atrocious and disgusting crimes, than a whole life of flagitious wickedness could possibly have afforded space to commit. John refused even to see the record of his infamy; he declared his entire resignation to the will of the council; and he was solemnly deposed, and condemned to imprisonment.

Deposition of John XXIII. 1415

Warned by the fate of John, Gregory XII. who had so obstinately resisted the council of Pisa, but who now found himself abandoned by all his adherents except the lord of Rimini, wisely employed the remains of his authority in descending from his station with some appearance of dignity.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

Resignation of Gregory XII.

His legate arrived at Constance to convene the assembly anew, in order to give it in his name the authority of a council; and, after this vain ceremony, a bull of Gregory was read by which he renounced the pontificate. Sigismund and the council had more difficulty in overcoming the inveterate perverseness of Benedict XIII., and the adherence of Spain to his cause. It was not until the indefatigable emperor had undertaken a long and pacific journey from Constance into Spain, and held a personal conference with the king of Aragon and Benedict at Perpignan, that his efforts were crowned with success. Benedict, indeed, still resisted the wishes of Europe, but the sovereigns of the Spanish peninsula were more accessible to reason. Finding their pontiff deaf to every entreaty to complete the re-union of Christendom, and disgusted by his selfish obstinacy and frantic imbecility, they at length abandoned the dotard. The council of Constance was convoked anew to gratify the pride or scruples of the Spanish church, and to admit her deputies to represent the fifth great nation of Europe; and an unanimous sentence pronounced the deposition of Benedict, and confirmed the work of peace.

Deposition of Benedict XIII. 1417

After the remains of the schism had thus been extirpated, Sigismund endeavoured to induce the council to provide for the secure reformation of ecclesiastical abuses, before the election of a new pope to fill the vacant chair of St. Peter. But national dissensions, which had already arisen in the assembly, and were artfully fomented by the

intrigues of the papal college, increased with alarming violence in every session, and finally defeated the purpose of the emperor. The German and English nations coincided with him; but the Italians, from interested attachment to the power of the papacy, and the French, from jealousy of Sigismund and hatred of the English, ranged themselves on the opposite side, and the Spaniards threw themselves into their scale. Sigismund and his supporters were compelled to yield to this majority; and the council, proceeding to the nomination of a pope, confided the election, upon this solemn occasion, to a double conclave of cardinals and national deputies. The French desired any pontiff but an Italian or a member of the sacred college; but the Germans and English, to oppose their wishes, agreed on this point with the Italians; and the combined interest of these three nations fixed the tiara on the brows of the cardinal Otho Colonna, who assumed the title of Martin V. The new pontiff speedily defeated the general project of reformation, by treating separately with each nation for the abolition of the ecclesiastical abuses of which they most complained; and he then dissolved the assembly. Thus terminated the great schism of the church, and with it the useful labours of the council of Constance. Of the well-known and execrable condemnation of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, in the early sessions of the council, I have omitted to speak, for the tale of horror has no immediate connection with Italian history.

Election of Martin V. 1418.

Termination of the Great Schism of the church.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

But the martyrdom of these fathers of the reformed faith, has given an odious character to the council of Constance, and inflicted eternal disgrace upon the principles which governed this celebrated congress of Roman Catholic theologians. *

Affairs of Lombardy.

During the period at which our attention has been occupied with the enterprises of Ladislaus of Naples, and the progress and close of the great schism, Lombardy was returning, through a frightful course of suffering, almost to the same condition in which she had been placed in the life-time of Gian Galeazzo. I have already noticed the anarchy into which that great province was plunged after the decease of the duke of Milan; and, at the epoch of his widow's violent death in prison in 1404, the fortunes of his house had reached their lowest ebb. His eldest son, Giovanni Maria, the new duke of Milan, still a minor, reigned in the capital of Lombardy: his second, Filippo Maria, to whom a part of the province had been bequeathed with the title of count of Pavia, resided in that city. But of the extensive possessions of their parent, the brothers retained only those two places; even in Pavia the Beccaria usurped a paramount authority; and all the other Lombard cities had either revolted to pass under tyrants of their own, or had been seized by the generals of Gian Galeazzo, and converted into

Continued anarchy in that province after the death of Gian Galeazzo.

* Lenfant, Histoire du Concile de Constance, passim. Raynaldi, Annales Eccles v. xvii. p. 455, ad fin.

lordships for themselves. The whole country was agitated with the struggles of these civic tyrants and ambitious condottieri. The lawless bands of mercenaries who were employed exclusively to decide their quarrels were privileged and steeled in atrocity; and the degraded and wretched people of Lombardy were exposed to every variety of robbery, and torture, and pollution, to gratify the avarice and more brutal passions of the ruffian soldiery.

In the incessant contest of obscure tyrants, which denied to the miserable population of Lombardy any interval of repose, one of the old captains of Gian Galeazzo, Facino Cane, signor of Alessandria, appeared likely to acquire a decided preponderance. His power extended over Novara, Vercelli, and Tortona; the veteran bands which he commanded were numerous and well appointed; and he obliged both the young princes of Milan and Pavia by force of arms, to entrust him with sovereign influence in their councils. If he permitted them to live, it was only because he had no children to whom to bequeath his power. The duke Giovanni Maria had hitherto reserved to himself no other share in the government than to preside at the torture and execution of state criminals. Of all the execrable tyrants produced by the family of Visconti, this was the most madly and wantonly ferocious. His infancy and boyhood had been nursed in atrocities; and as he had advanced towards manhood, he discovered

Giovanni Maria, duke of Milan.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

His atrocities,

an inherent appetite for blood, and a horrid delight in sporting with the extremities of human agony. His principal diversion was to course the victims of the Milanese tribunals with bloodhounds; and his huntsman, who had fed these dogs with human flesh to accustom them to this royal chase, was his chief favorite. When the prisons of Milan were emptied of prey, Giovanni Maria declared his resolution to avenge the murder of his mother, in which he had himself assisted; and under this plea he successively delivered over Giovanni di Posterla, and many other Ghibelin gentlemen of Milan, to be torn in pieces by his dogs. Even the young son of Posterla was thus inhumanly sacrificed; and when the dogs, perhaps sated with prey, would not fasten on the helpless boy as he knelt for mercy to the duke, the fiend-like huntsman of that prince cut his bowels open with his knife. The reason revolts from the belief of such enormities; yet they are verified by the agreement of several contemporary chroniclers, and history has even preserved the name of the huntsman, Squarcia Giramo, who was the fitting instrument of his master's devilish propensities.

The citizens of Milan might justly prefer the yoke of an ordinary tyrant, to the unrestrained ferocity of this monster of guilt; and when Facino Cane, after completely possessing himself of the government, somewhat in the capacity of regent, was at last known to be seized with a mortal

disease, they anticipated the moment with horror when their duke would be freed from his control to reign with redoubled ferocity. The Posterli and other noble families of Milan resolved not tamely to await the renewal of his tyranny; they waylaid him as he was proceeding to mass; they set upon him and succeeded in ridding the world of his crimes. A few hours after the assassination of the duke, Facino Cane breathed his last; and Milan seemed abandoned to a new anarchy. The conspirators were disposed to have placed the ducal crown on the head of a bastard of the house of Visconti; but Filippo Maria, the young count of Pavia, evinced unexpected activity and address. He secured the possession of the citadel of Pavia, over-awed the Beccaria, and allied himself with the partizans of Facino Cane at Milan. To gain the adherence of the formidable bands of that chief, who were strongly attached to the memory of their general, he offered immediately to espouse his widow, Beatrice Tenda, although she was above twenty years older than himself; and the hasty conclusion of this indecent marriage determined the fidelity of the army of Facino. By their powerful support, Filippo Maria was firmly seated on the ducal throne of Milan; and, though personally unwarlike, he began from the period of his accession gradually to restore the ascendancy of his house in Italy, by the same insidious policy as had been pursued by his father, whom he nearly resembled in character.

and assassination. 1412

Filippo Maria, duke of Milan.

CHAP. VI. PART I.

Revival of the Milanese power.

When the new duke began his reign, his dominions comprehended only Milan and Pavia, and the four inferior cities over which Facino Cane had established his sway. But the veteran bands of cuirassiers who had served under that condottiere, and were now in the allegiance of Filippo Maria, formed a more numerous and better disciplined force than the signors of Lombardy could oppose to his designs; and he had shortly the penetration or good fortune to discover in his ranks, and to elevate to the supreme command of his army, an adventurer whose splendid abilities and daring courage completely re-established the ascendancy of the Milanese power. This was Francesco Carmagnola, who happened—then a simple cuirassier—to distinguish himself under the eye of the duke, on the only occasion on which Filippo Maria put himself at the head of his army. The prince observed his gallantry and rewarded it by promotion; and from this beginning Carmagnola rapidly rose to be numbered among the greatest captains of Italy. Three years after the accession of Filippo Maria, the operations of Carmagnola began to fill the petty Lombard tyrants with alarm; in the following campaign, he broke the strength of a league which they had formed for their defence, and took Lodi by escalade; and finally, after an obstinate struggle, he reduced numerous cities into subjection to his master. The lord of Placentia was driven from his possessions; the signor of Lodi

1416

was inveigled to Milan by the arts of the duke, treacherously seized, and executed with his son; one of the Beccaria shared the same fate when taken in arms, and another was murdered in prison; and the ruler of Como, despairing of successful resistance, tendered his voluntary submission.

Cruel ingratitude of Filippo Maria to his duchess.

The first use made by Filippo Maria of the fortune which had thus smiled upon him since his marriage with Beatrice Tenda, was to rid himself of his benefactress. Neither gratitude towards the woman to whom he owed so much, nor respect for her many amiable qualities, could prevail in his vicious nature over his disgust of a connection, in which there existed such a disparity of years. He accused his duchess of an adulterous commerce with a young courtier; the youth was forced by excruciating tortures to avow whatever was desired of him; and he was even induced by the hope of pardon to repeat his shameful confession at the foot of the scaffold. But this weakness could gain him no favor, and he was led to execution with the unhappy Beatrice, from whom the most frightful torments had been unavailing to extract a similar acknowledgment of guilt. In her last moments, she sternly reproached her fellow-sufferer with his base pusillanimity, and died solemnly protesting her innocence, but declaring that the displeasure of Heaven had justly overtaken her for having, by the indecent haste of her union with her murderer, violated the re-

CHAP. VI. PART I.

spect which was due to the memory of her first husband.

It is among the mysterious dispensations of a wise Providence that guilt should sometimes be permitted to triumph; and the remorseless destroyer of Beatrice pursued his schemes of ambition with uninterrupted prosperity. The doge of Genoa had joined the league of Lombard signors against the duke of Milan, and, after his successes over these tyrants, Carmagnola invaded the states of that republic. Genoa was no longer under the yoke of France, but she seemed to merit no repose, and to find none but under the dominion of a master. Her people were as usual divided among themselves by the eternal and deadly spirit of faction; and when Carmagnola ravaged her territory in successive campaigns, his army was accompanied by Genoese exiles and assisted by treason. The distracted republic was at the same time engaged in a war with the king of Aragon, who had made a descent upon Corsica; and the alliance of this monarch with Filippo Maria threatened the blockade of Genoa by land and sea. Thus torn by civil war, and assailed by foreign enemies, the doge himself could discover no cessation for the miseries of the state but under the protection of the duke of Milan. He abdicated his power, and under the same conditions, by which the republic had submitted twenty years before to the king of France, consigned the signiory of Genoa to Filippo Maria. While this

His acquisition of the signiory of Genoa,

1421

and conquests in Lombardy.

acquisition increased the influence and power of the duke of Milan, the few signors who had risen on the death of Gian Galeazzo in the eastern parts of Lombardy, and had hitherto escaped subjugation to Filippo Maria, were easily overthrown by Carmagnola. Besides the chieftains of other petty lordships, Pandolfo Malatesta, signor of Brescia, and Gabrino Fondolo, tyrant of Cremona,* were stripped of their possessions. The former was obliged to seek a shelter with his brother at Rimini, the latter was reduced to exchange the lordship of Cremona for a single castle. The marquis of Este was compelled to purchase peace by the cession of Parma; and Francesco Gonzaga, lord of Mantua, was only protected from spoliation by the interference of Venice. That republic,

* This ferocious tyrant, originally a soldier of fortune, and afterwards favorite of Ugolino Cavalcabo, signor of Cremona, had acquired possession of that city by the massacre of his benefactor, and of all the leading citizens, seventy in number, during a banquet to which he had invited them. Just before the council of Constance, John XXIII. and the emperor Sigismund met in one of their conferences at Cremona, and together ascended its tower of tremendous height, attended by Fondolo, to enjoy the beautiful prospect, over which the eye ranges from thence, of one half of Lombardy and the majestic course of the Po. Fondolo had at one moment the design of precipitating his guests from these battlements to occasion an unexpected revolution in Christendom, by which he might somehow profit. Eleven years later, and shortly after his abdication of the signiory of Cremona, as related in the text, he was seized by order of Filippo Maria and beheaded at Milan. When exhorted on the scaffold to confess and repent —" I repent," replied he, " of nothing but this—that when I had the emperor and pope at the top of my great tower at Cremona, I did not hurl them together over the parapet."

CHAP. VI. PART I.

now engaged in extending her dominion over the province of Friuli, had hitherto resisted all the entreaties of her Lombard allies for aid against the formidable power, which even threatened her own continental possessions. But though she had ungratefully abandoned Pandolfo Malatesta, her faithful adherent, who had often commanded her armies, the Mantuan territory was too important a barrier for her provinces, for her to suffer it to be occupied by the duke; and by an amicable treaty which she negociated with Filippo Maria, she exacted from that prince a guarantee for the states of Gonzaga.

Encounter between the Milanese and Swiss. 1422

The power of the house of Visconti was now, after twenty years of reverses, triumphantly re-established in Lombardy; and all the usurpers who had dismembered the principality of Gian Galeazzo, and inflicted so many fresh calamities upon that beautiful country, had been successively hurled from their power. The last enterprise by which Carmagnola crowned the greatness of Filippo Maria, brought his troops into contact with a more formidable enemy than any which they had hitherto encountered—the hardy republicans of the Swiss cantons. The family of Rusca, (which had governed at Como,) had some pretensions which they sold to the duke of Milan, over the town of Bellinzona, at the foot of the Alps, where the canton of Uri retained a garrison to guard the passes into their territory. The place was surprized by the Milanese troops; who also seized upon Domo Dossola, and advancing to

mount St. Gothard occupied all the Levantine valley. At another juncture these aggressions would have rouzed all Switzerland to arms. But the cantons were at this epoch unfortunately agitated by domestic jealousies; their contingents were reluctantly afforded to assist the people of Uri in resenting the injury which they had sustained; and the part only of their force which descended from St. Gothard, consisted but of three thousand infantry armed with pikes. Yet this small army advanced, without knowing or regarding the strength of their enemies, to offer battle, in the field of Arbedo near Bellinzona, to above double their numbers of the veteran cuirassiers of Italy. The Milanese gens-d'armerie commenced the encounter with a furious charge; but their shock was broken against an impenetrable phalanx of pikemen. Four hundred of the Italians were already slain or dismounted, and still the Swiss remained immoveable. Carmagnola then ordered his men-at-arms to quit their horses and charge on foot; and the combat was renewed with obstinate carnage between this invulnerable infantry of cuirassiers and the brave mountaineers. The impervious armour and overwhelming numbers of the Milanese now turned the tide of victory; but Carmagnola, enraged at the slaughter which had been inflicted on his bands, refused the demand of the republicans for quarter; and the struggle continued with desperation, until the sudden attack of his rear-guard, by a foraging detachment of Swiss, induced Carmagnola to draw

Battle of Arbedo.

off his troops, in the supposition that the rest of their army had descended from the mountains. Of the Swiss four hundred men had fallen; of the Italians above three times that number; and their consternation at finding with what an enemy they had to do, was even greater than at the mere amount of their loss. But the Swiss were plunged in dissensions; they abandoned the contest and suffered many years to elapse before they thought of revenge; and Carmagnola retained possession of the Levantine valley. Thus was the power of Filippo Maria asserted, from the Ligurian sea to the summit of mount St. Gothard, and from the frontiers of Piedmont to the confines of the ecclesiastical states:—a larger extent of dominion than had fallen to the obedience of any Italian prince, since the ruin of the ancient kingdom of the Lombards.*

Grandeur of Filippo Maria.

* Muratori, Annali A.D. 1404—1422, passim. Sismondi, parts of cc. 61, 63. But I have compared their versions and ascertained their agreement with the Milanese chronicle of Andrea Billius in the 19th volume of Script. Rer. Ital., and with the life of Filippo Maria by P. Candidus Decembrius, in the 20th volume of the same collection.

PART II.

Florence—Her Prosperity—Aggressions of the Duke of Milan—War between Filippo Maria and Florence—Successive Defeats of the Republic—Venice—Change in her Policy—Successful Pursuit of continental Dominion—Its doubtful Advantage—The Aid of Venice solicited by the Florentines—Francesco Carmagnola, injuriously treated by Filippo Maria, retires to Venice and determines her on War—League formed by Florence and Venice—Repeated Wars of the Two Republics against the Duke of Milan—Successes of Carmagnola—His Victory at Macalo—His Reverses—Atrocious Ingratitude of Venice to her General—Execution of Carmagnola—Third Peace of Ferrara—Splendid Acquisitions of Venice—Reign of Joanna II. of Naples—Rivalry of the Great Condottieri, Sforza Attendolo and Braccio di Montone—Louis III. of Anjou, invited by the Pope and Sforza to dethrone Joanna—Her Adoption of Alfonso of Aragon—War between the Aragonese and Angevin Parties—Rupture between the Queen and Alfonso—Her Substitution of Louis of Anjou for her Heir—Death of Sforza and Braccio—Last Years and Death of Joanna II.—Domestic Affairs of Florence—Grandeur of the Republic under the Guelf Oligarchy—Character of their Administration—Revival of the Democratical Party—Rise of the Medici—Giovanni—And Cosmo—His Banishment and triumphant Recall—Fall of the Oligarchy—Establishment of Cosmo de' Medici in the Direction of the State—Disputed Succession to the Crown of Naples—Contest between Alfonso of Aragon and Regnier of Anjou—Establishment of Alfonso on the Neapolitan Throne—Genoa recovers her Liberty—New War between the Duke of Milan and the Republics of Florence and Venice—Rise of Francesco Sforza—Peace of Martinengo—Pontificate of Eugenius IV.—League formed against Francesco Sforza—

*His gallant Defence and Reverses—Sforza succoured by Venice and Florence—War of the Republics against the Duke of Milan—Death of the Duke Filippo Maria—The People of Milan establish a Republic—Their numerous Enemies—Sforza enters their Service—His Victories and Treachery—He leagues with the Venetians against his Employers—Dissensions at Milan—The City besieged by Sforza, declares in his Favor—Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan—*RISE OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY*—Its Origin—The Counts of Maurienne and of Savoy—Commencement of their Power in Piedmont—State of that Province before the Fifteenth Century—Piedmont under the Dominion of the Counts of Savoy—Amadeus VIII., the First Duke of his House.*

CHAP. VI. PART II.

Florence.

WHEN Filippo Maria, duke of Milan, had re-established the grandeur of his house, while he inherited the inordinate and perfidious ambition of his father, Florence could scarcely hope for the longer continuance of peace. Since the death of Ladislaus, king of Naples, that republic, leaving Lombardy to its own distractions, had enjoyed nearly ten years of uninterrupted repose and felicity. Under the able and vigorous sway of the Guelf oligarchy, at the head of which the Albizzi indirectly governed in her councils, her states had been protected from all assault or insult. While the rest of Italy was scathed with fire and sword, agriculture flourished in her well-peopled vales; the foreign commerce and wealth of her merchants increased with prodigious activity; and both in the capital itself and in her rural territories, the best evidence of national prosperity was exhibited in a contented and happy population. The rapid aggrandizement of the Milanese power, and the

Her prosperity.

faithless enterprises of Filippo Maria, threatened the first invasion of this tranquil condition; and the Florentines are justly chargeable with want of foresight in suffering that prince, at a time when their strenuous opposition might easily have repressed the growth of his dangerous strength, to renew in his person the alarming ascendancy which his father had acquired over the independence of Italy. The chiefs of the Guelf party, indeed, seem to merit exemption from the reproach of this blindness; for they endeavoured in 1419 to persuade their republic to afford assistance to Genoa in her struggle against the duke of Milan, and to reject the pacific overtures of Filippo Maria. But the people were not anxious for war; they accused the Guelf aristocracy of restless ambition; and they obliged their rulers to conclude a formal peace with the duke, with whom their state had continued nominally at war, ever since the death of his father. By this treaty the Florentines and the duke bound themselves respectively, the former to abstain from interference in the affairs of Lombardy, the other in those of Romagna and Tuscany.

Aggressions of the duke of Milan.

This condition was but imperfectly observed by the duke of Milan from the first moment of its enactment; and he had no sooner firmly planted his throne over Lombardy, than he openly evinced his contempt for his engagement by interfering in the concerns of Bologna. That city, after asserting her freedom during the distractions of the schism, had then passed under the absolute sway

CHAP. VI. PART II

of Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio, the son of her first tyrant of that name whom she had overthrown; and she had, lastly, been delivered from the yoke of Antonio, to fall under the papal government. The legate, who commanded in Bologna for the pope, solicited the aid of the duke of Milan in expelling the Bentivogli from their rural fiefs in Romagna; and Filippo Maria not only sent his troops for the purpose into the province, but at the same time, in concert with a Ghibelin party at Forli, seized and garrisoned that lordship.

War between Filippo Maria and Florence. 1424

These aggressions were in themselves declarations of war; and the Florentines immediately commenced reprisals. But they began the hostilities which were thus kindled in Romagna under discouraging and adverse circumstances. The celebrated condottiere, Braccio di Montone, who had formed a principality for himself about Perugia, and was bound by subsidies to serve the Florentines at need with his bands, just at this epoch lost his acquisitions and his life, in a battle against an army which the pope and the sovereigns of Milan and Naples directed against him. The Florentines had fully relied upon him for a general and an army; but the ten of war were now compelled to take various other captains with their bands into pay, and to engage Carlo Malatesta, signor of Rimini, in the supreme command of their forces. But the troops of Milan were

Successive defeats of the republic. 1425

everywhere successful: in the first campaign, they surprised the lord of Imola, the ally of Florence, in his city, and afterwards completely

routed the Florentine army and made Malatesta himself prisoner, near the castle of Zagonara; and, in the second year, they inflicted on the republic four consecutive defeats, each of which dispersed an army. To this train of disasters the Florentines opposed that passive but obstinate and elastic courage, which was the enduring virtue of their state. Calmly collecting the wrecks of their mercenary bands, they for the seventh time equipped a new army; and, themselves remaining on the defensive, set in motion every art of negociation to induce the emperor, the pope, and the Venetians, all of whom were interested in maintaining the equilibrium of Italy, to declare against the duke of Milan. But Sigismund had abundant occupation in Germany; and Martin V. bore a deadly hatred to Florence, for some petty ridicule which he had received from her populace, during his residence in the city soon after his elevation to the tiara. It was in the community of interests or ambition between the Venetians and themselves, that the Florentines found the alliance which they sought.

Venice. Change in her policy.

Since the commencement of the fifteenth century, the policy of the Venetian republic had taken a new direction. The recovery of the Trevisan March by the Milanese alliance, in her war against the lord of Padua in 1339, had restored to her the small Italian province which she had lost in the war of Chiozza; but it was not until the tempting occasion which was afforded by the offers of the Milanese regency after the death of

CHAP. VI. PART II.

Successful pursuit of continental dominion.

Gian Galeazzo, that her senate began to indulge in schemes of continental dominion. By the ruin of the houses of Scala and Carrara, the republic came into the possession of a very considerable territory; and from this period a passion for extending her states by new conquests, and for mingling in the wars of Italy, began to prevail in her counsels over the ancient policy of the senate: —neutrality in the peninsula, and the pursuit of commercial wealth and aggrandizement in the east. During the minority of the Milanese princes, indeed, her rulers made no attempt to advance her frontier farther into Lombardy; for their attention was occupied for several years with a dangerous war against the emperor Sigismund, which was produced by their purchase of the Dalmatian cities from Ladislaus of Naples. The republic had with difficulty maintained her Italian provinces against the assaults of the emperor, until his eagerness to pacify the church produced a truce. After this accommodation, a sanguinary war, in which Sigismund became engaged with the Bohemian reformers, not only relieved Venice from farther apprehension of his attacks, but enabled her to subjugate the country of Friuli and part of Istria. These provinces had for many centuries acknowledged the temporal sovereignty of the patriarchs of Aquileia; but the reigning prelate paid for his alliance with Sigismund by the loss of his states. The people of Udine, his capital, abandoned him to surrender to Venice; and the republic, by the acquisition of

this new territory, secured her continental dominions, and held the passes from Germany into eastern Italy.

Its doubtful advantage.

Yet the possession of these states on the main land of Italy proved a very questionable advantage to Venice. Since the war of Chiozza, she had recovered, by her purchase from Ladislaus, Zara and other cities on the Dalmatian coast which formerly belonged to her; her maritime colonies in Albania and the Morea had been successfully extended; and her commerce was immense.* But after she had acquired a large

* There are some detailed statements in Sanuto (Vite de' Duchi di Venezia,—end of the life of Tomaso Mocenigo) relative to the commercial wealth and power of Venice at this epoch, which, as the historian lived within half a century afterwards, seem well worthy of credit. These accounts are embodied in three curious discourses, by which the doge Tomaso Mocenigo is made to dissuade the senate from war; and indeed Sanuto tells us expressly, that he has done no more than to copy from a manuscript left by Mocenigo himself. I cannot measure the patience of the counsellors of St. Mark's, but I am sure that such interminable speeches as these of the doge would fill St. Stephen's with slumbering senators. The second of them begins with the creation of Adam, and travels through all history, ancient and modern, sacred and profane. Nevertheless, we may glean from Mocenigo several very interesting points of information on the state of his republic. So immense was her commerce that, with Lombardy alone, the annual value of her interchanges in cloths, linens, stuffs of gold, silks, raw wool and cotton, spices, sugar, dye-wood, &c. was near 29,000,000 of ducats. She drew from that great province 1,600,000 ducats annually in coin, and her profits in this traffic were 600,000. Altogether she had 10,000,000 ducats out in mercantile capital, producing 4,000,000 of profit per annum. Her mint coined one million of ducats *of gold* every year. This vast

CHAP. VI. PART II.

territory in Italy, she neglected the care of her colonies and her navy, and the interests of her foreign trade,—the true foundations of her power —to engage in the troubled politics and wars of the peninsula. Thus she ruinously expended her resources, which might better have been employed in resisting the Turkish power and upholding her eastern dependencies; and she excited animosities against her in Europe, which were perpetually increasing during the whole of the fifteenth century, until they exploded in the league of Cambray.

The aid of Venice solicited by the Florentines.

When the ambassadors of Florence laboured to unite the Venetian senate in a league with their republic to chastise the ambition and perfidy of Filippo Maria, there were still not wanting in that grave assembly many cautious politicians, and among them the doge Tomaso Mocenigo, to inculcate an adherence to the ancient principles of their state and the maintenance of neutrality. These pacific counsellors at first succeeded in dissuading the senate from hostilities; but shortly afterwards, on the death of Mocenigo, Francesco

commerce was carried on by above three thousand merchant vessels, and guarded by forty-five gallies, besides numerous smaller vessels of war; and the power and trade of Venice were together supported by 36,000 sailors. Yet, notwithstanding these great resources, the republic was left in less than ten years — so ruinous were the charges of her Milanese wars—with a debt of above 4,000,000 ducats of gold.

I should observe that the current ducat was worth about 3*s.* 6*d.* and the ducat of gold above 14 shillings, at a time when the value of money was still from five to seven times greater than at present.

Foscari was placed in his chair; and the warlike temper of the new doge realized the dying warning of his predecessor, that his election would bring a contest upon the republic. The Florentines renewed their propositions; and they were now powerfully seconded by the man, who had been most instrumental in elevating the pride of their enemy. Francesco Carmagnola had performed too important services for Filippo Maria, to escape the suspicion of so jealous a tyrant. The duke dreaded his popularity with the soldiery, his extraordinary talents, and the influence of the wealth and station which he had himself bestowed upon him. He gradually withdrew all confidence from him, he successively deprived him of his commands, he denied him admission to his presence; and Carmagnola at length indignantly quitted the Milanese dominions, breathing vengeance against his ungrateful master. He first repaired to the duke of Savoy, and revealing to that prince the projects which Filippo Maria had formed for the conquest of his possessions, excited him to arm for his defence. He then traversing Switzerland, to avoid the direct route through the Milanese states, arrived at Venice, and immediately applied himself to instigate the republic to attack Filippo Maria. The picture which he drew before the senate of the treacherous and restless character of the duke, of his secret machinations and dangerous schemes of aggrandizement, determined the wavering counsels of the senate. A league was formed between Florence

Francesco Carmagnola, injuriously treated by Filippo Maria retires to Venice, and determines her on war.

CHAP. VI. PART II.

and Venice, by which the two republics bound themselves to maintain at their equal charge 16,000 cuirassiers and 8,000 infantry, and Florence resigned to her ally whatever conquests should be effected in Lombardy. The duke of Savoy, the people of Sienna, the marquis of Este, and the lord of Mantua, successively joined the formidable confederacy; and the allies solemnly declared war against the duke of Milan.

League formed by Florence and Venice. 1426

Repeated wars of the two republics against the duke of Milan.

The operations which followed are interesting only in their results. Carmagnola gratified his revenge by leading the numerous mercenaries of Venice against his former master; victory still attended him; and notwithstanding the opposition of a large Milanese army, under some of the ablest condottieri of the times, he reduced the city of Brescia with its territory in a single campaign. Filippo Maria was seized with a panic at these sudden reverses; and accepting the mediation of the pope, he concluded a peace with his enemies before the close of the year, by which he yielded the conquests of Carmagnola to the Venetians. But he had scarcely signed the treaty when he repented of its terms; his subjects felt the honor of their state put to shame by his concessions; and he was rouzed by their discontent to resume the struggle in the following year. Still no better success attended his arms; and Carmagnola advanced to form the siege of Cremona. Around this place—so much had the numerical force of the mercenary armies employed in these Italian wars now increased—nearly

Successes of Carmagnola.

1427

seventy thousand combatants were assembled, of whom one half were cavalry; and Filippo Maria for once thought it necessary to encourage his troops by his transient presence. No decisive engagement however occurred at the moment; but, before the end of the campaign, Carmagnola inflicted so complete a route upon the Milanese army, near the village of Macalo upon the Oglio, that 8,000 cuirassiers were made prisoners. This encounter was characterized by some circumstances peculiar to the times. Carmagnola had skilfully posted his army behind a morass, the surface of which, from the dryness of the season, was capable of bearing the weight of infantry. He irritated the enemy to attack him by capturing Macalo before their eyes; but their heavy cavalry had no sooner charged along the causeway intersecting the marshy ground, which he purposely left unguarded, than his infantry assailed them with missiles on both flanks. In attempting to repulse them the Milanese cuirassiers sank into the morass; their column was crowded on the narrow passage and thrown into confusion; and the infantry of Carmagnola, then venturing among them on the causeway, and stabbing their horses, made prisoners of the dismounted cuirassiers as they lay helpless under the enormous weight of their own impervious armour. We are assured that not a single human life was lost in this encounter; and when the Venetian commissaries on the following morning claimed the numerous prisoners, only a few hundreds were produced. The mercenaries,

His victory at Macalo.

though ranged under opposite standards, always regarded each other rather as comrades than enemies; the conquerors had released almost all their disarmed captives during the night; and Carmagnola himself gave liberty to the remainder.

After this victory, which Carmagnola was accused by the Venetians of neglecting to improve, all parties except Venice became weary of the burthens of the war; and in the following year that republic unwillingly consented to a peace, by which she obtained the cession of Bergamo and part of the country to the banks of the Adda, in addition to her former conquests; none of her allies obtained any material advantage. The short interval of repose which this pacification afforded to Italy, was broken by the vengeance of Florence for some assistance which the signor of Lucca had given to the duke of Milan. Notwithstanding the state of exhaustion to which the late contests had reduced the resources of the republic, the war against Paolo Guinigi was unanimously resolved upon in her councils, and carried to the gates of Lucca. Guinigi, losing the hope of preserving his power against the assaults of the Florentines, had already entered into a treaty to sell his signiory to them, when the discovery of his negociation drove his subjects to a successful revolt. Lucca once more revived as a republic; but Florence refused to grant peace to the state whose tyrant alone she had professed to attack; and a defeat which her army sustained failed in reducing her to moderation. On the contrary

1428

1430

1431

she excited the ambition of the Venetians to a third war against the duke of Milan, who had indirectly assisted the Lucchese; and that republic, in the hope of adding Cremona to her acquisitions, accepted the proposals of Florence. But in this new contest, the fortune of Carmagnola appeared to have deserted him. He was surprised and defeated; and a fleet of Venetian gallies having ascended the Po to co-operate with him, was soon after attacked and destroyed in his presence by an armament, which Filippo Maria equipped in the same river and manned with Genoese sailors.

His reverses.

The subsequent inactivity to which Carmagnola was reduced by a contagious disorder among his horses, increased the depression of the Venetians; and strengthened the suspicions which they had begun to entertain of the fidelity of their great general, ever since his release of his prisoners after the battle of Macalo. The council of ten had for some time determined on his destruction. He was invited to Venice to confer with the senate on the restoration of peace, and welcomed, both on his route and when he arrived at the capital, with studied and flattering honors. He was introduced into the ducal palace; but his suite were advised to retire as he would be detained in long conference with the doge and the assembled senate, and it was already late in the day. As soon as the palace was cleared of his attendants, the gates were closed; he was then told that the doge was indisposed and could not see him until the next morning; and as he crossed

Atrocious ingratitude of Venice to her general.

the palace court to withdraw, he was suddenly seized. A door which led to his destined prison was opened, and he had only time to exclaim that he was lost, when he was hurled down into his dungeon. A few days afterwards he was put to the torture; and during his sufferings, which were aggravated by a wound received in the service of this detestable oligarchy, a confession of guilt is said to have been extorted from him. No proof, however, was ever adduced against him; and he was conveyed to public execution with a gag over his mouth, as if his murderers could thus stifle the reproach of their enormous ingratitude. He was beheaded between the two pillars which stand before the place of St. Mark.

Execution of Carmagnola. 1432

After the cruel fate of this illustrious captain, the general war languished during another year, when by the common exhaustion of all parties a new peace was at length concluded at Ferrara. Lucca remained free; the conquests made since the last pacification were mutually restored; and Filippo Maria conceded to the Florentines the renunciation of his alliances in Tuscany and Romagna. Venice alone retained the acquisitions for which she had been indebted to the valour and ability of Carmagnola. She was now mistress of nine contiguous and valuable provinces in northern Italy: the Dagado—her original territory, a narrow slip of country which skirted the lagunes—the March of Treviso, and the districts of Friuli, Padua, Rovigo, Vicenza, Verona, Bergamo, and Brescia. These territories stretched

Third peace of Ferrara. 1433

Splendid acquisitions of Venice.

across Lombardy to the river Adda, beyond which it was fated that the possessions of Venice should, from this period, receive no farther extension. *

Reign of Joanna II. of Naples. 1414

Before we pursue the course of events further in northern Italy, I must carry the reader back a few years to revert to the history of the southern parts of the peninsula. On the death of Ladislaus, king of Naples, his sister Joanna, as he left no children, had ascended the throne of his kingdom. This princess who, since the death of her husband, a son of the duke of Austria, had returned to Naples, and who at the period of her accession to the crown had already reached her forty-fifth year, was devoid of all mental energy and talent, and the slave of sensual appetites, † which seemed to strengthen in intensity as her advancing age increased the shame of indulgence. Throughout her reign she was surrounded by unworthy favorites, in the choice of whom she was determined solely by their personal attractions. Her first minion was Pandolfello Alopo, a young man of five and twenty, of low birth, and with the solitary recommendation of a handsome per-

* Poggio Bracciolini, Ist. Fiorent. b. v. p. 320. ad fin. and vi. ad p. 374. Marin Sanuto, Vite de' Duchi di Venezia (Tomaso Mocenigo and Francesco Foscari) pp. 976—1029. in Script. Rer. Ital. v. xxii. Daru, Hist. de Venise, v. ii. pp. 243—407. Sismondi, part of c. 64, and c. 65.

† The private life of Ladislaus had been but one course of abandoned debauchery, and the vices of Joanna emulated its infamy.—Thus as Giannone observes, Charles III., the founder of the royal line of Durazzo, and his queen Margaret, gave to the world two monsters of shameless lasciviousness.

CHAP. VI. PART II.

son. The queen lavished honors and power on him; she created him a count and her chamberlain; but his influence could not prevent her from forming a matrimonial alliance which was importunately pressed upon her by the people, and which she herself felt necessary to the support of her throne. Notwithstanding her notorious dissoluteness, several princes eagerly sought her hand, and she selected from among them James of Bourbon, count of La Marche, with the condition that he should not aspire to the royal dignity. But James was designing and severe; and he had no sooner entered the Neapolitan dominions than by the support of the nobility, who detested the upstart favorite of Joanna, he assumed the title of king. He was resolved to reign in effect and to reform the licentious court of the queen; and after celebrating his marriage with her, he immediately caused her minion to be arrested, tortured, and put to a cruel and ignominious death. The confession of the queen's weakness, which was extorted from Pandolfello, was made by James of Bourbon the pretext for subjecting her to a rigid state of durance within her palace; and he seized all the powers of state, and confided them wholly to his French followers.

This severity and preference of foreigners produced their ordinary effects upon the capricious and passionate Neapolitans. The exclusive authority usurped by the French had become generally odious, when the people were strongly excited to indignation and pity by the dejected and

care-worn appearance of their queen, who, after a year of seclusion, was at last permitted by her husband to be present at an entertainment given to her by a Florentine merchant. The nobles immediately invited the populace to seize the opportunity of delivering their sovereign; the call to arms was eagerly obeyed; and Joanna was rescued from her guards, and conveyed in triumph to one of the royal palaces. Her husband attempted to take refuge in one of the fortresses of the capital, but he was compelled to submit to the queen; and, after this revolution, Joanna retained him a prisoner for three years, before she was induced by the solicitations of the pope to release him. But the count De La Marche still found himself kept in dependance in her palace; he seized the first occasion of escaping from the capital, and after vainly endeavouring to excite an insurrection in the provinces, he returned to France, and buried his disgust of the world in a Franciscan convent.

1416

Meanwhile Joanna, who could never preserve her freedom from the ascendancy of some favorite, had made the first use of her recovered power to elevate a new minion, Ser Gianni Caraccioli, to the control over her affections which Alopo had formerly enjoyed. Caraccioli however, besides the qualities which rendered him the favored lover of Joanna, had more prudence than his predecessor, and contrived to gain the good will of the nobles and people, while he governed in the palace of the queen with despotic sway. The

only person who aspired to rival him in authority over the nation, and in the favor of the queen, was the famous condottiere Sforza Attendolo, who had continued in the service of Ladislaus until the death of that monarch, and had been created by him great constable. First treacherously imprisoned by Alopo, and then released by him on the approach of the count De La Marche to confederate against that prince, Sforza had been thrown into chains by James of Bourbon, and narrowly escaped the fate of his associate. The revolution which restored Joanna to power had liberated Sforza also, and re-established him in his dignity of great constable; and from this period the possession of sovereign influence in the state was disputed between this ambitious captain and Caraccioli. The desire of the feeble queen to rid her favorite of the troublesome opposition of Sforza, gave a new character to the affairs of her kingdom, and connected them in some measure with those of the pontificate.

I have already observed in another place that the celebrated leader, Braccio di Montone, formed a principality for himself about Perugia. It was amidst the distractions of the papal dominions during the council of Constance, and on the fall of the Neapolitan power immediately after the death of Ladislaus, that this extraordinary man commenced his career of greatness. Himself a noble exile of Perugia, he succeeded, attended by the rest of his banished order, and at the head of veteran bands of adventurers who were devoted

to his service, in subjugating his native city after an obstinate resistance. But when he had thus violently established his dominion over Perugia, he at once gained the affections of his subjects by all the qualities of a good sovereign, and attached the people, who passed for the bravest in Italy, to his personal glory by the martial splendour with which he invested their little state. After otherwise extending his possessions, he at last marched against Rome. On the death of Ladislaus, the ecclesiastical capital had revolted in the name of the pope; but the council of Constance left her almost without a legitimate object of obedience, and Braccio easily took possession of her government with the title of defender of Rome. But he had provoked the hatred of a powerful rival by attacking, during the captivity of Sforza, some fiefs in the patrimony of St. Peter, which Ladislaus had bestowed upon that general; and Sforza, enraged at this ungenerous conduct from one who had been his ancient companion in arms, eagerly fell into the views of Joanna for his removal from Naples, by leading his own bands, and the forces of the kingdom at her command, against Braccio. He obliged that chieftain by his superior numbers to evacuate Rome; he obeyed the orders of the queen by placing the legate of Martin V. in possession both of that capital, and of the conquests of Ladislaus in the ecclesiastical states; and he passed, by her desire, into the papal service with the army he commanded. In return for these good offices of

1417

Joanna, the pope sent two cardinals to Naples to perform, in his name, the ceremony of her coronation; and the queen had besides gained her object in delivering her favorite and herself from the presence of Sforza. That general was now appointed gonfalonier of the church, and prepared to pursue his revenge on Braccio di Montone. He led his troops against his rival to strip him of his principality; but he had to do with a superior genius in the military art. Braccio drew him among the defiles of Romagna, and so completely defeated him that Sforza, after the capture of about two thousand of his cuirassiers, with difficulty effected his escape to the gates of Viterbo.

Rivalry of the great condottieri, Sforza Attendolo and Braccio di Montone.

The quarrel of Sforza Attendolo and Braccio di Montone had one remarkable consequence. Both these great captains had been educated to arms in the company of St. George, under Alberic di Barbiano; and in their youth, they had been sincerely united in the bonds of friendship. But ambition had now severed them; and so great, and so nearly equal was their military character, that the veterans of the school of St. George ranged themselves into opposite factions under their respective banners. This martial rivalry was continued long after the death of the great leaders in whose struggle of fame and ambition it had commenced; it was maintained by the distinguished captains who were formed in their service; and, for above twenty years, the bands, which they had originally created, were almost

always arrayed on opposite sides in the wars of the peninsula. Sforza was bred a simple peasant in the village of Cotignola;* and though he was invested with considerable fiefs, and with the dignity of great constable in the Neapolitan states, he scarcely rose, to the period of his death, above the doubtful condition of an adventurer. In nobility of birth, in the splendour of his fortunes, and perhaps even in the qualities of command, the personal reputation of Braccio was on the whole superior to that of Sforza; but the greatness of the Perugian signor expired with himself, and the peasant of Cotignola was the ancestor of a ducal dynasty.

Louis III. of Anjou, invited by the pope and Sforza to dethrone Joanna.

On the defeat which Sforza had sustained in his expedition against Braccio, Martin V. applied to the queen of Naples for the means of remounting the army of her great constable. But Caraccioli, who had learnt with joy the discomfiture of Sforza, prevented his mistress from complying with the demand of the pope; and Martin, irritated at her refusal, and disappointed of some hopes

* Sforza was, in his youth, at labour near his native village, when some of the soldiers of Alberic di Barbiano, who were passing, invited him to enrol himself in the company of St. George. He threw his axe up into an oak which grew near the spot, declaring that, if it fell again to the ground, he would remain a peasant for life; but that, if it hung in the branches, he would receive the circumstance as an omen of future grandeur. The axe remained in the tree, Sforza became a soldier, and his grandson, the duke of Milan, said to Paolo Giovio—"All the greatness with which you see me surrounded, I owe to the bough of the oak which caught the axe of my ancestor."

CHAP. VI. PART II.

which he had entertained that she would adopt his nephew for her heir, shared the indignation of Sforza against the favorite and herself. Their common vengeance prepared a long train of evils for the kingdom of Naples. The nobility of that country were weary of the influence of Caraccioli; Joanna at an advanced age remained without heirs; and circumstances conspired in favoring the dormant pretensions of the house of Anjou to the Neapolitan crown. Secretly encouraging Louis III., the grandson of the adopted heir of the first Joanna, to assert his right of succession to her dominions, the pope reconciled himself with Braccio of Montone; and Sforza, his forces recruited by the subsidies of the Angevin prince, led his army into the Neapolitan states. When he approached the capital, he sent his bâton of command to Joanna, in token of the renunciation of his allegiance; and Louis of Anjou, arriving shortly afterwards from Provence, and disembarking his followers near Naples, joined him at Aversa, and straitened the queen in her residence.

1420

Her adoption of Alfonso of Aragon.

In the critical situation in which Joanna was placed by this invasion, there appeared to herself, or her favorite, no other means of defence than by rendering the reversion of her kingdom the price of foreign assistance. Alfonso, king of Aragon and Sicily, was at this epoch engaged in attempting the conquest of the island of Corsica from the Genoese; and he was easily tempted to abandon this enterprise by the hope of adding the inheritance of Naples to his possessions, and

thus terminating the long separation of the two Sicilies. I have formerly observed that the island of Sicily was, at the close of the fourteenth century, possessed by Martin, son of the king of Aragon, who had married its queen Maria. This union produced no offspring; and on the death of Martin (who had survived his wife) in 1409, his father was suffered to unite Sicily to his crown. Alfonso, by collateral descent, had succeeded to the Aragonese dominions in 1416; and this prince, who was endowed with many brilliant qualities, was now adopted by Joanna as her heir, and shortly dispatched an armament to her aid. His fleet compelled the inferior squadron of Anjou to retire; Louis and Sforza, who were besieging Naples, could not prevent the debarkation of the Aragonese forces; and the fortresses of the capital were consigned to their charge. The war which was thus kindled by the rival pretensions of Aragon and Anjou, was animated in the succeeding year by the presence of Alfonso, and by the entrance into the kingdom of Braccio di Montone, who, attended by his followers, was taken into the service of Joanna with the title of great constable and prince of Capua. The contest plunged the state in frightful anarchy, for the nobility, as usual, ranged themselves on opposite sides; but no action of importance was fought. Louis of Anjou was himself without funds to support the army of Sforza, and withdrew to Rome; the pope was weary of contributing to his necessities; and the cause of Alfonso appeared to have

War between the Aragonese and Angevin parties.

1421

gained a decided ascendancy, when a new intrigue in the palace of Joanna, suddenly gave a total change to the posture of affairs.

Rupture between the queen and Alfonso.

It appears uncertain whether Alfonso, after delivering Joanna from her enemies, and being publicly recognized as her destined successor, really meditated the anticipation of this inheritance, or was merely unable to brook the insolence of Caraccioli, and resolved to render himself independent of him. But his increasing power, and the occupation of the fortresses of the kingdom by his troops, excited the suspicion and fear of the favorite, who dreaded to receive from his hands the same summary treatment which his predecessor in the queen's affections had experienced from the count De La Marche. He instilled his own apprehensions and jealousy of Alfonso into Joanna; her distrust of her adopted son, which was perceived and returned, daily increased; and she began secretly to negociate with the Angevin prince who pretended to her crown. By the intervention of the pope, Louis resigned the possession of the places which he held in her kingdom, and Sforza was once more received into the service of the queen. The restoration of this great captain to her favor was attended with a trait of generosity foreign to the perfidious spirit of the age. When Louis of Anjou retired to Rome, Sforza, reduced to the extremity of poverty and distress, suddenly trusted himself, with a few unarmed cavaliers, in the camp of Braccio, and frankly solicited his rival to aid him by his advice

and credit with the queen in re-establishing his fortunes. Braccio was worthy of this reliance on his faith; and the short lived reconciliation of the two captains was followed by perfect confidence between them. They discussed their respective conduct of past campaigns against each other, as if they had only been engaged in an amicable contest of skill; and it was through the good offices of Braccio, who wished to return to his own principality, that Sforza was re-established in the favor of Joanna. * He was not now the less agreeable to the queen and her lover that he favored the Angevin interest. The mutual animosity between Joanna and Alfonso had already attained such a height that they fortified themselves in different palaces in the capital, and at length an open rupture ensued. Alfonso seized the person of Caraccioli, notwithstanding a safe conduct by which he had induced him to repair to his palace; be besieged Joanna herself in her fortress; and the queen was compelled to summon Sforza, whose troops were quartered in Campania, to her deliverance. He immediately marched at

1423

* A contemporary chronicler, Bonincontri di San Miniato p. 127. (Scrip. Rer. Ital. v. xxi.) has recorded a sarcastic sally of Joanna on this occasion, which belongs to a livelier tone of intellect than that for which her memory has credit—When Sforza was introduced to her to renew his allegiance as great constable, her ministers hesitated on the proper form of oath to be administered to him. "Consult Sforza himself," said the queen, "for he has so often sworn to me, and to my enemies, that nobody is so well acquainted with all the forms under which an oath may be conveniently taken and violated."

CHAP. VI. PART II.

her command, and encountering the Aragonese troops who obstructed his approach, succeeded, after an obstinate engagement, in annihilating their force. All their captains fell into his hands, and the queen thought the liberty of her minion cheaply purchased in exchange for them.

Her substitution of Louis of Anjou for her heir.

The deliverance of Joanna and Caraccioli was immediately followed by the queen's revocation of her adoption of Alfonso, and the substitution of Louis III. of Anjou for her heir. When Alfonso found the Angevin faction thus united against him with the party of the queen, by which he had hitherto been supported, he was not long able to maintain his ground in the kingdom; and after vainly endeavouring to induce Braccio di Montone, who was otherwise occupied, to arrive to his support, he yielded before the superior strength of Sforza, and having himself quitted Naples for Aragon, where he was summoned by the affairs of that kingdom, his troops were shortly driven from all the possessions which they held, except one of the castles of the capital.

1424

Death of Sforza,

The epoch of the re-establishment of peace in the Neapolitan dominions was marked by the death of the two great rival condottieri. Braccio di Montone, desiring to reduce under his authority the Abruzzos, the government of which Joanna had bestowed upon him, had marched into the province, and laid siege to its capital Aquila. The people of this city had shut their gates upon him, and resolutely defended themselves. Martin V., who beheld with alarm his

increasing power encircling and over-awing the states of the church, had induced Joanna to revoke her commission to him and to promise protection to the besieged; and Sforza, on the departure of Alfonso from Naples, was dispatched to their relief. The rival chiefs were destined to meet in combat no more. Sforza on arriving at the mouth of the river Pescara, found a body of the enemy posted on the opposite bank. He crossed over with a part of his cavalry and dislodged them; the sea was rising; and he returned to induce the remaining gens-d'armerie to try the dangerous passage. But in attempting to save a page who was carried down the stream, his own horse unfortunately lost his footing, and the hero himself sank into the current. His armour prevented him from swimming; twice his hands appeared above the waves, covered with their iron gauntlets, and vainly clasped in supplication for aid; he was borne down into the ocean, and his corpse was never recovered. It was at this trying moment that Francesco, the celebrated son of Sforza, in the midst of his grief for the loss of his father, displayed all the talent and presence of mind which distinguished him throughout his brilliant career. Though the youngest of his father's captains, he adroitly succeeded in inducing the whole of his fellow adventurers to take an oath of fidelity to his personal fortunes; and this object accomplished, he easily obtained from Joanna the confirmation of the titles and fiefs of his parent.

CHAP. VI. PART II.

and of Braccio.

Braccio di Montone, forgetting the long enmity of Sforza, and the hostile expedition against himself in which he had lost his life, sincerely deplored his fate. Since his rival could no longer encounter him, it seemed time that he should himself quit the lists, and superstition might anticipate the approach of his own course to its close. The heroes of the fifteenth century were the dupes of judicial astrology; it had been foretold that rivers boded danger to Sforza, and that Braccio should not long survive the death of his opponent; and the accomplishment of the first prediction gave weight to the second. Yet Braccio prepared to encounter the troops of Joanna, of the pope, and of the duke of Milan, with his accustomed courage and skill. Their immense superiority of numbers overwhelmed him; he was defeated, as I have formerly noticed, wounded, and captured. His hurt was not mortal; but his proud spirit rejected all consolation or aid; he never spoke after he was made a prisoner, he refused all sustenance, and in three days after his defeat, he expired. His death immediately destroyed the principality which he had formed; but the remains of his bands rallied under Niccolo Piccinino, the ablest of his captains, and passed at first into the service of Florence.

Last years of Joanna II.

After Alfonso of Aragon and Sicily renounced the contest in southern Italy, Joanna reigned peacefully for about ten years, nor does this long period offer any object worthy of attention. Louis III., acknowledged as her undoubted heir, was

satisfied to reside in Calabria, which she assigned to him as a sort of appanage, and where his mild virtues won him the affection of the people. Meanwhile Joanna abandoned herself and her kingdom, without restraint, to the power of Caraccioli; and, even when she had passed her sixtieth year, she continued, from long habit, to yield to this favorite his original ascendancy over her mind. Caraccioli however tyrannized over her feeble spirit, even beyond the endurance of womanly love and doating infatuation; and he at length drove her to seek refuge from his imperious humour in the confidence of one of her own sex. This new favorite, the duchess of Suessa, watched the moment when the reproaches of Caraccioli, at the refusal of Joanna to some unreasonable demand, had left her in tears. By her arts she inflamed the weakness of the imbecile old queen to anger against Caraccioli, awakened her apprehensions of his designs, and induced her to permit his arrest. His enemies assassinated him, and obtained an amnesty from the queen, under pretence that he had fallen in resisting the royal order. This tragedy in the palace of Joanna, at first revived the hopes of Alfonso of Aragon, with whom indeed Caraccioli himself had lately begun to resume the negociations of former years. The king now actively pushed his interest with the duchess of Suessa, and by her aid, had even obtained from Joanna a secret revocation of her adoption of Louis of Anjou; when he marred his plans by securing the interest of the husband of

1432

CHAP. VI. PART II.

the duchess, who was detested by his wife. No further steps were taken in favor of Alfonso; and Joanna, on the sudden death of the duke of Anjou without children, even adopted his brother Regnier. This was her last act, for she died herself shortly after Louis in her sixty-fifth year, utterly worn out in mind and body, rather by the effects of a life of debauchery than by the usual advance of old age. *

Her death. 1435

Domestic affairs of Florence.

Since the defeat of the Ciompi, and the final establishment in 1382 of the Guelf oligarchy, under the direction of the house of Albizzi, in sovereign influence over the government of the state, I have scarcely had occasion for notice of the domestic affairs of Florence. But the epoch before us produced a memorable revolution in the republic, which was destined to affect the whole course of her subsequent fortunes. For nearly half a century, the triumphant party had swayed her councils with remarkable success abroad, and with few and unimportant interruptions to tranquillity at home. In this period, Pisa, Arezzo, Cortona, and other places of inferior note had passed, either by violence, or by the silent pro-

Grandeur of the republic under the Guelf oligarchy.

* My authority for this account of the reign of Joanna is principally the twenty-fourth book of Giannone (Ist. Civ. del Regno di Napoli). But I have also referred to the chronicles of San Miniato, before quoted, and to the lives of Sforza and Braccio, by Leodrisius Cribellius and Johannes Campanus in Latin, in the nineteenth volume of Muratori's great collection. M. Sismondi's narrative is altogether full and correct, but scattered in perplexing transitions through his eighth and ninth volumes.

gress of dependance as subject-allies, under the dominion of the republic; her possessions extended over the half of Tuscany; and the acquisition of the maritime territory of Pisa, and especially of the port of Leghorn, gave a secure and convenient outlet for her foreign commerce. Her manufactures and trade had never been so flourishing; her wealth had increased so prodigiously that her circulating money alone, if its amount has not been exaggerated, exceeded four millions of florins—about two millions sterling; and the superabundance of her riches was elegantly expended in superb architectural embellishment and in the successful cultivation of letters.

Character of their administration.

As long after the sedition of the Ciompi as the terror endured, with which the memory of that appalling insurrection of the dregs of the populace had filled all the respectable citizens of Florence, the Guelf aristocracy were strongly supported in their proceedings against the democratical party. Their enemies were successively banished; the spirit of the populace and lower citizens had been crushed by defeat; and the Albizzi and the great commoners, their associates, remained the sovereign citizens of the state. The government of this oligarchy was exercised in a very peculiar manner. Their names did not frequently enter into the lists of gonfaloniers and priors, for, by the mixture of popular election and lottery by which the offices of magistracy were filled, the same persons could only come in by rotation once in two years. But whenever foreign danger

threatened the state and the ten of war were to be nominated, the chiefs of the Albizzi were certain to form the majority of that important executive council; and though they did not otherwise appear ostensibly as the rulers of the state, they were generally able, at the biennial replenishing of the bags out of which the names of citizens to hold office were taken, to exclude from election on the new lists all persons hostile to their faction. When this political artifice, this unjust exclusion under the sanction of constitutional forms, failed in effecting the objects of the oligarchy, they did not scruple to have recourse to more open violations of the rights of their opponents. At two different periods—in 1393, when they were alarmed by a conspiracy, and again in 1411—they assembled the parliament of the people, ever disposed to side with the strongest faction; they intimidated the unorganized multitude by their armed adherents; and they obtained the nomination of a temporary dictatorship or *balia*. This was a supreme council of large numbers, into which the oligarchy of course carefully provided that none should be elected but their own partizans. The balia, during the period to which its existence was limited, had the power of naming all magistrates without the process of the lottery, and of banishing suspected persons. It is in the nature of an oligarchy to narrow and restrict the exercise of popular rights; and the ruling faction of Florence were disposed to follow up their second suspension of the constitution, by the establishment of a

permanent council of their party, with the right of the initiative voice in every legislative enactment. Thus, if the predominance of their influence had continued, the party of the Albizzi, or Guelf society, from their increasing suspicion and fear of the people, would gradually have deprived them by successive innovations of all share in the government; and would have finished by subjecting the state to an hereditary aristocracy as exclusive, if not as severe and tyrannical, as that of Venice.

The prosperity which Florence had now enjoyed for half a century under the government of the Guelf oligarchy, was principally attributable to the talents and moderation of its leaders. From the fall of the democratical party in 1382, to his own death in 1417, Maso degl' Albizzi was the chief of his house and faction, and the real mover of the republic. He was a profound and vigorous politician, but was just and temperate in personal character. He was surrounded too by friends who were worthy of him; and when he died, Nicola di Uzzano, a man of very similar qualities, undertook the guidance of affairs until Rinaldo degl' Albizzi, the youthful son of Maso, should attain age and experience to occupy the station of his father. As long as Nicola lived, the loss of Maso was supplied to his party and to the state, for both these friends were disposed alike to uphold constitutional liberty: as far at least as was possible consistently with the supremacy of their faction in the republic. But when the oligarchy

CHAP. VI. PART II.

1433

were deprived by death of the latter of these venerable chiefs, and Rinaldo degl' Albizzi was left alone at the head of his party, the rash and impetuous character of this young leader both disqualified him from the equable government of the state, and yet more from the management of a dangerous struggle with the democratical party, which it was perhaps no longer possible to avoid.

Revival of the democratical party.

It was one consequence of the riches which had poured into Florence under the administration of the Albizzi, that the children of many of those who, in the sedition of the Ciompi, had been numbered with the lowest populace, had now risen to wealth and respectability, and indignantly found themselves excluded from political rights. They were easily led to attach themselves to those great families who had formerly advocated the cause of the people; the ancient nobility, too, who had been excluded from the administration of affairs by both factions, united in preference with that which was now oppressed like themselves; and dissensions among the Albizzi had even gradually thrown many of their number into the arms of the same party. The democratical faction had thus altogether become equal to the oligarchy in the wealth, birth, and talents of its adherents, and infinitely superior to that body in numerical strength. But one family, in particular, by the accumulation of its vast commercial wealth, by the mild and cautious demeanour of its chiefs, by their graceful virtues, their humane liberality and princely magnificence, had silently gained the general respect

and affection of this party, and now engrossed its absolute direction. This was the celebrated house of the Medici.

Rise of the Medici.

The Medici had long ranked at Florence among the principal families of the popolani grandi; and in tracing the foreign and domestic history of the republic during the fourteenth century, I have more than once found occasion to mention their name. In the struggle against the Guelf oligarchy which immediately preceded and followed the insurrection of the Ciompi, Salvestro de' Medici was one of the leaders of the popular faction. Though, owing probably to the moderation of his conduct, he escaped the sentences of death or exile which fell upon his associates, his family were afterwards excluded by the ruling oligarchy from power; and they came from this epoch to be looked upon, throughout the lengthened oppression of the democratical party, as the only stay and support which proscription had left to the popular cause. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Giovanni de' Ricci, who was only distantly related to Salvestro, was the most distinguished individual of the Medici. During their political reverses, his family had continued the diligent and successful pursuit of commerce; and Giovanni had amassed immense riches which were graced by an unblemished reputation for commercial integrity. So extensive and honorable were the connections of his house, that he was known over all Europe as one of the greatest merchants of the age; and his eminence at Flo-

Giovanni

CHAP. VI. PART II.

rence was supported by his ability, his amiable disposition, and his generous virtues. His evident disinclination to trouble the government of the state won him the esteem of his political opponents, although he firmly resisted some new encroachments which they attempted upon the rights of the people; and it may be received as a circumstance creditable both to himself and to the liberality of the Albizzi, that we find him several times called to the highest offices of the state, and among them to a seat in the council of the ten of war: an honor which was also bestowed upon his son Cosmo.

and Cosmo.

The wealth and influence of the Medici were already established; the moderation of Giovanni could not be expected to descend to his heirs. His son Cosmo who succeeded on his death to his riches and station, inherited his noble and generous qualities, and far surpassed him in talent. But under the veil of prudence, Cosmo concealed an ambition from which his father had been free. The consideration in which he was held by the Venetian republic, his intimacy with Francesco Sforza and other distinguished characters of the peninsula, and the numerous private friends and adherents whom he had acquired by his magnificent generosity in Florence itself, all conspired to render him the first citizen of the republic. He became decidedly the leader of the democratical faction, and in concert with his partizans began openly to expose the errors of the administration in the conduct of the war against Lucca, the ill

1430

success of which had increased the unpopularity of the Albizzi. The oligarchy were now utterly inferior to their enemies in strength; and yet Rinaldo degl' Albizzi was no sooner left to guide his party without the control of Uzzano, than his impetuosity hastened the crisis of a struggle which, whenever it arrived, could not prove otherwise than ruinous to his faction. The rotation of the lottery gave a gonfalonier and priors to the state who were devoted to the Albizzi, and Rinaldo instigated this signiory to summon Cosmo de' Medici before them, under the pretext that he had been guilty of some malversation in office during his magistracy in the council of war. Cosmo confiding in his innocence calmly presented himself; he was thrown into prison; and Rinaldo then caused the citizens to be assembled in parliament. His armed followers filled the avenues of the public place; the people were as usual intimidated; and a balia was formed of the friends of the Albizzi to deliberate on the fate of Cosmo. A timely bribe to the gonfalonier, or the timidity of the oligarchy, saved the chief of the Medici from an iniquitous sentence of death; but a decree was passed for his banishment for ten years with many of his friends.

1433

His banishment,

Rinaldo, whose procedure had aimed at the life of Cosmo, had vainly goaded his own party to greater violence; the oligarchy now failed altogether in resolution or power. The partizans of Cosmo were not excluded from the new lists of magistracy; and, in about a year, a gonfalonier

CHAP. VI. PART II.

and priors, all of whom were known to be attached to the cause of the Medici, came by rotation into office. These magistrates retaliated upon the Albizzi the measures which they had adopted. The moderation of Cosmo, in submitting to the injustice of his enemies in preference to plunging his country into civil war, had gained him increased reputation. He had been received in his exile by the republic of Venice with distinguished honors. The first act of the new Florentine signiory was to obtain the nomination of a balia composed entirely of his friends. By this body Rinaldo with his whole party, after a fruitless attempt to resist, were banished from the city; and Cosmo was triumphantly recalled. The Guelf oligarchy was completely overthrown; and from this epoch to the close of a long and fortunate life, Cosmo de' Medici exercised a sovereign influence over the affairs of the republic. *

and triumphant recall. Fall of the oligarchy. Establishment of Cosmo de' Medici in the direction of the state. 1434

The revolution which gave to Cosmo de' Medici the direction of the Florentine counsels made no change in the foreign relations of the republic. In the same year with his elevation to power, the duke of Milan violated the terms of the last peace of Ferrara, by interfering in a petty sedition in one of the towns of Romagna; and in the new war, by which Florence deemed it necessary to resent this act of bad faith, Venice was still her ally. After some uninteresting hostilities, peace

* Macchiavelli, Istoria Fiorent. b. iv. ad p. 78. Scipione Ammirato, Storia Fior. pp. 997—1100. Roscoe, Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, vol. i. ad p. 28.

was restored upon the same conditions as before; but the restless temper and incessant projects of Filippo Maria prevented all hope of permanent repose to neighbouring states. A circumstance which arose out of the disputed succession to the throne of Naples, soon involved the two republics in a fresh contest with him.

Disputed succession to the crown of Naples.

On the death of Joanna II., Alfonso of Aragon immediately made his claim upon her kingdom. This he primarily founded upon the right which had been transmitted to the house of Aragon by Constance, daughter of Manfred; and in fact he already reigned in Sicily as the nearest heir to the house of Swabia and, through that royal line, to the Norman conquerors of southern Italy—the heroes of the dynasty of Guiscard. These brilliant pretensions were tarnished by the illegitimacy of Manfred, and invalidated by their frequent transmission in the female line from house to house; and although Alfonso laboured to strengthen them by asserting the adoption of Joanna, which he denied that she had possessed the power to revoke, he trusted with more reason to the weight of his arms. The Neapolitans were for the most part inclined to have obeyed the testament of Joanna in favor of Regnier of Anjou. But that prince was unfortunately, at this critical moment for his interests, prisoner to the duke of Burgundy; and Alfonso, landing from Sicily in the Neapolitan states, had already won over many partizans, when a reverse befel him which seemed for ever to wither his hopes. He had laid siege to the

CHAP. VI. PART II.

city of Gaeta, where the Genoese possessed some commercial establishments and kept a garrison by desire of the inhabitants. A fleet was fitted out at Genoa to relieve the place, and on the approach of this armament, the chivalrous spirit of Alfonso induced him personally to lead his Catalan sailors to the encounter. The two fleets met near the island of Ponza, and notwithstanding the superior numbers of the Catalans and the presence of their king, the standard of Aragon drooped before the banner of St. George. After a long and gallant conflict, the Genoese were completely victorious; the royal galley of Aragon was compelled to strike; and the capture of Alfonso, with his brother and a splendid train of nobles, swelled the pride of the victors.

1435

This naval victory, the most important and glorious that had for a long period been fought in the Mediterranean, produced consequences the most opposite from those which might have been anticipated. The duke of Milan, as sovereign of Genoa, with the design of depriving her of the enjoyment of her triumph, sent an order to her admiral to land the royal prisoner at Savona, from whence Alfonso was immediately conducted to the Milanese court. Filippo Maria, dark and faithless as was his character in many respects, had already proved upon more than one occasion, by his conduct to other prisoners of distinction who had fallen into his hands, that he was not incapable of a generous action. His reception of Alfonso was marked by the most delicate respect; his attentions invited

easy converse; and then the graceful accomplishments of the captive monarch—his noble figure, his elegant manners, his classical and sparkling genius—completely charmed his gloomy host into confidence and friendship. Alfonso represented to the duke that the part which, in concert with the eternal hatred of the Genoese towards the Catalans, he had hitherto taken against him and in favor of the cause of Anjou, was not the true policy for the sovereign of Lombardy; that the French were, of all the neighbours of Italy, the only people to be dreaded; and that, so far from assisting any dynasty of their nation in ascending the Neapolitan throne, the security of his dominions required that he should carefully close the Alps against the intrusion of these dangerous foreigners into the peninsula. Thus the king persuaded Filippo Maria, and with reason, that their mutual interests were clearly identified; he and his nobles were released without ransom and loaded with presents; and when he quitted the capital of the duke, into which he had been conducted a prisoner, a close and lasting alliance had been concluded between them.

1436

Contest between Alfonso of Aragon and Regnier of Anjou.

To avoid the necessity of recurring again to the struggle for the Neapolitan crown, I shall in this place briefly relate the issue of the contest between the parties of Aragon and Anjou. On his release from Milan, Alfonso proceeded to Gaeta, which, by the good offices of Filippo Maria, had now declared its adherence to him. Meanwhile Isabella, wife of Regnier, a princess of great

CHAP. VI. PART II

spirit, had arrived at Naples to sustain the rights of her captive lord. But she brought with her neither treasures nor soldiers, and though her virtues and prudence endeared her to the Angevin partizans, she supported with difficulty the unequal confiict against the king of Aragon. At the end of about three years, her husband, having effected his ransom, joined her. He, too, arrived at Naples without money or followers; and, to stay a falling cause, had only courage and generosity of character. These qualities could not prevent the defection of traitors and the selfish desertion of his alliance by the pope; and his possessions were gradually wrested from him, until the city of Naples alone remained in his interest. The people of that capital however were still faithful to him, and throughout a long siege were inspired by his presence to endure all the miseries of famine, until the troops of Alfonso entered their city by surprise through a deserted aqueduct. Regnier escaped, but perceiving the hopelessness of a farther struggle, he finally abandoned the kingdom to his rival, and thus left Alfonso to perfect the foundation of the Aragonese dynasty of the Two Sicilies. *

1438

Establishment of Alfonso on the Neapolitan throne. 1442

The whole conduct of the duke of Milan with respect to Alfonso, (to return from this anticipation of the Neapolitan annals) had excited the

* Alfonso, in thus uniting his insular crown with that of Naples, was the first sovereign who formally assumed the title of *King of the Two Sicilies*, which his successors have borne ever since.

greatest indignation at Genoa. Filippo Maria had deprived that capital of the glory of exhibiting a royal captive through her streets; he had afterwards released his prisoner without obtaining for the Genoese any advantage from their victory; and he had allied himself with their enemy. By several injurious actions, the duke had betrayed his suspicion and jealousy of his republican subjects, and his resolution to humiliate them; and their indignation and wounded pride at length burst forth in a furious insurrection. The Milanese garrisons were overpowered and expelled from all the Ligurian territory; and thus Genoa, recovering her liberty, rose again to the rank of an independent state.

Genoa recovers her liberty. 1435

The allied republics of Florence and Venice hailed the re-establishment of the Genoese freedom, as a new curb set upon the ambition of the Milanese duke. They immediately recognized the independence of Genoa, and received her into their alliance and protection, in violation of their existing treaty with the duke, by which they had acknowledged him for signor of that city. This it was which provoked a new war between the confederated republics and Milan. Inflamed with anger at their conduct, and inspired by Rinaldo degl' Albizzi and the Florentine exiles of his party with the hope of exciting a new revolution in their state, Filippo Maria first made a secret but abortive attempt upon her territories, and afterwards proceeded to more open hostilities. On the first news that the troops of Milan had begun

New war between the duke of Milan and the republics of Florence and Venice.

1437

CHAP. VI. PART II.

to act against Florence, Venice put her forces in motion to cause a diversion in favor of her ally, and thus the war was kindled both in Tuscany and Lombardy. I have no intention to trace with minuteness the fluctuating course of this struggle, which continued through several years. The details of the Italian campaigns of the fifteenth century are perhaps more totally devoid of interest, than the military operations of any other age of the world. The tardy movements of the heavy cavalry, of which armies were almost exclusively constituted, and whose advance was arrested by the slightest intrenchment; the feeble results of the hostilities in which such a force could engage; the perpetual treasons, the rapine, the inactivity, by which the condottieri ruined alike their employers and their enemies, and protracted every war in languid indecision;—all these circumstances tend to divest the contests of that age of the slightest attraction: while their bloodless character provokes us to ridicule, and deprives the imagination even of the excitement of pity and horror, which the picture of human suffering and destruction might otherwise awaken. The reader will have little cause for regret if I pass over the particulars of these wars to notice only their consequences.

Upon some disagreement regarding the payment of subsidies to Francesco Sforza, which Venice refused, Florence in the second campaign concluded a separate peace with Milan; and the Venetians, soon found themselves unequal to

1438

maintain a continental war unaided, against the whole power of Filippo Maria. Giovanni Francesco, marquis * of Mantua, too, deserted their alliance for that of Visconti, and opening a passage to the Milanese troops through his territories into the Venetian provinces, joined them in overrunning the districts of Brescia and Verona. Piccinino, the general of the duke, formed the siege of Brescia, which was heroically defended against him by the Venetian garrison and the inhabitants, notwithstanding his superiority of force and his numerous artillery. For we may remark, as a proof of the increasing use of ordnance against fortresses, that the besiegers employed twenty-four pieces, of which fifteen were bombards, of such a calibre as to throw stone balls of three hundred pounds, weight. The works of the place were ruined by their fire; and nothing but the fortunate accident by which part of the exterior wall crushed the assailants, instead of choaking up the ditch by its fall as expected, saved the defenders. They repulsed the long and furious as-

* Giovanni Francesco Gonzaga, lord of Mantua, had lately purchased the dignity of marquis for his family for 12,000 florins from the emperor Sigismund, during a new visit made by that monarch to Italy. Sigismund entered the peninsula in 1431, received the crowns of Lombardy and the empire at Milan and Rome, and re-crossed the Alps in 1433. Though his appearance at first excited a slight political sensation, so fallen was the imperial power that this expedition of the successor of Frederic Barbarossa and of Henry VII., did not in any degree influence the condition of Italy, or produce a single event to deserve our observation in the text.

CHAP. VI. PART II.

sault of the Milanese; and Piccinino, after sustaining a heavy loss, converted the siege into a rigid blockade.

The danger of Brescia, and of all the continental possessions of Venice, awakened the alarm of Florence at the progress of the Milanese arms. Venice applied in her distress to her ancient ally, and a new confederacy was formed between the two republics. Francesco Sforza was taken with his bands into their joint pay, and placed at the head of their armies; and the talents of this general, and the formidable numbers of the forces ranged under his orders, soon restored the equilibrium of the struggle. On the other side Niccolo Piccinino, with the veteran soldiery of Braccio di Montone, was in the service of Filippo Maria, for whom he commanded in chief. The rival schools of condottieri therefore were ranged against each other, with the plains and defiles of eastern Lombardy for their theatre of combat. They had occupied this field with well balanced success for about three years, when a sudden intrigue of the duke of Milan put a period to the war, and raised Francesco Sforza on the first step of the throne which he was destined to ascend.

1439

Rise of Francesco Sforza.

Shortly after the death of his father, Sforza had passed with his bands into the pay of Filippo Maria, and had continued to serve him with fidelity and reputation during his three first wars with Venice and Florence. After the conclusion of the third peace of Ferrara, he had led his formidable company into Romagna, and availing

himself of the distractions into which the ecclesiastical states were thrown on the death of Martin V., had made an easy and rapid conquest of the March of Ancona and other territories. To purchase his aid against more detested enemies, the new pope, Eugenius IV., was compelled to confirm him in possession of the March, as a fief of the Holy See; and, from that epoch, Sforza aspired above the trade of a mere condottiere, to establish himself as an independent prince. Besides his new conquests, he held his father's extensive fiefs in the kingdom of Naples; and he was the chosen leader of a numerous and brilliant gens-d'armerie. He was gifted with consummate political sagacity, and he saw all the splendid opportunities which the state of Italy opened to his ambition. Filippo Maria was without legitimate children, but he had a natural daughter Bianca; and Sforza perceived the value which her pretensions might acquire, if upheld by the strong arm of a soldier of fortune. He had long obtained from Filippo Maria the promise of her hand; but the suspicious and irresolute duke had alternately retracted and repeated his pledge. While Filippo Maria thus trifled, Sforza strove to impress his future father-in-law, whose timid and faithless character he perfectly understood, with the importance of his alliance. He had therefore passed into the service of the republics against him: but, to preserve the possibility of a reconciliation, he had evinced even in his hostility a repugnance to carry the war to extremities.

CHAP. VI. PART II.

This artful policy was crowned with success; and Filippo Maria, who was wearied of the war, and found himself oppressed by the insolent demands of his own condottieri, finally turned his eyes upon Sforza to deliver him from the subjection, with which he was threatened by his generals. The aspiring and skilful adventurer was besieging the castle of Martinengo for the Venetians; the Milanese commanders had placed him in a very hazardous situation by intercepting his supplies, and shutting up his army between their intrenchments and the castle; and he was already anticipating the fatal moment when he should be starved into a surrender. At this dangerous crisis in his fortunes, he was surprised by a confidential message from Filippo Maria. He was chosen by the duke arbiter of a peace which all the belligerents equally desired; the treaty was signed on the spot; and the restoration of tranquillity was immediately followed by his marriage with Bianca Visconti; who, with youth, beauty, and the greater charm of an amiable mind, brought him for her dowry Cremona and its territory. By the peace of Martinengo, Filippo Maria acknowledged the freedom of Genoa; but the contending powers generally were established in their former possessions and rights. *

Peace of Martinengo. 1441

For several years after this pacification, the whole system of Italian politics was closely asso-

Pontificate of Eugenius IV. 1431—1447

* Giannone, Ist. Civ. di Napoli, b. xxv. c. 7. Poggio Bracciolini, Ist. Fior. b. vii. p. 385, ad fin., and b. viii. ad p. 420. Macchiavelli, Ist. Fiorent. b. v, pp. 96—186. Sismondi, cc. 67—70.

ciated with the personal fortunes of Francesco Sforza; and the league, into which Eugenius IV. now entered for stripping him of his conquests in the ecclesiastical state, invites our attention to the affairs of the papacy. Since the elevation of this pontiff to the chair of St. Peter, on the death of Martin V. in 1431, the church had been agitated by dissensions which threatened Europe with the revival of the great schism. By a decree passed at Constance, it had been provided that general councils should be convoked at regular intervals. Martin V. dreaded the repetition of such assemblies beyond the Alps; and he had therefore endeavoured to hold them in Italy, where he could more easily influence their deliberations. But the party in the church, whose object it was to reform the abuses of papal authority, as eagerly desired a transalpine congress; and Martin was compelled by the wishes of Europe to appoint the city of Basle for the seat of a future council. The period assigned for its convocation had arrived in the first year of the pontificate of Eugenius IV.; and after the pope, who anticipated the republican tone of its discussions, had vainly endeavoured to transfer its session to an Italian city, a long and obstinate contest arose between him and the assembled representatives of Christendom. In the course of this struggle, the council of Basle proceeded, in 1439, to the extremity of deposing Eugenius, and electing Amadeus, a retired duke of Savoy, to fill his chair. But their intemperate spirit disgusted the powers of Europe; their par-

tizans gradually deserted them; and the schism which they had raised quietly expired, with no other consequence, than to throw the plan of restraining the papal power by periodical councils into discredit and disuse.

I pass lightly over the transactions at the council of Basle, for they have little connection with our subject. The only influence of the dispute between Eugenius and that assembly, upon the affairs of Italy, was to increase the disorders into which the temporal dominions of the church were thrown by the violence and incapacity of the pope. Martin V. had recovered and left the papal states under the authority of the Holy See; he had governed them with ability; and his care to aggrandize his family, the Colonna, was the greatest reproach which attached to his fame as a sovereign. But Eugenius IV. had no sooner succeeded him, than the perverse and vicious qualities of this pope produced new troubles and anarchy. Besides his contest with the council of Basle and the Hussites of Germany, he was at the same time, or in rapid succession, at war against the Colonna, against the citizens of Rome, against Sforza and other condottieri, against Alfonso of Aragon, and in concert with Venice and Florence, against the duke of Milan. Over the Colonna he prevailed; but the people of Rome, who were driven by his exactions to revolt in 1433, compelled him to seek a refuge at Florence, and once more conjured up the fleeting image of a republic. By ceding the March of Ancona to Sforza, he procured the pow-

erful aid of that chieftain against other invaders, and recovered great part of his remaining states; and after having first endeavoured by arms, on the death of Joanna II., to seize upon Naples as a lapsed fief of the Holy See, and then seconded the partizans of Regnier against Alfonso, he shortly after the peace of Martinengo unscrupulously deserted the Angevin prince, to pursue a new scheme of ambition and treachery.

League formed against Francesco Sforza.

Although Eugenius IV. was indebted to Sforza for the recovery of his temporal dominion in Romagna, it had not been without the greatest reluctance that he was compelled to erect the March of Ancona into an independent fief for that great condottiere. Gratitude for the services of Sforza, who had faithfully fulfilled his engagement to him, was a feeling foreign to the selfish nature of this pope; and he now eagerly entered into a proposal for despoiling the general, whom he had created gonfalonier of the church, of all his possessions in the March. Sforza had yet more powerful enemies than Eugenius IV. In the affairs of Naples he had followed his father's politics, and continued his attachment to the house of Anjou; he was the declared partizan of Regnier; and Alfonso naturally returned his enmity. To pursue his plans more freely in northern Italy, Sforza had, however, concluded a truce with the Aragonese monarch for his fiefs in Campania and the Abruzzos; but Alfonso had notwithstanding treacherously taken advantage of his absence to attack these possessions. As soon as Sforza was liberated by the

peace of Martinengo to direct his attention southward, he put his troops in motion to chastise the perfidy of Alfonso, to succour Regnier of Anjou—then in the height of his distress at Naples,—and to defend his father's great fiefs in the kingdom. But the moment had arrived when it behoved him to look to his own safety alone. Alfonso, alarmed at his approach, sent pressing intreaties to his ally the duke of Milan to dissuade his son-in-law from succouring Regnier; and Filippo Maria, who might have accomplished this object amicably by his personal influence, preferred to effect it through the ruin of his daughter's husband. Although he had bestowed the hand of Bianca upon Sforza, his capricious and jealous temper deterred him from reposing his confidence on so aspiring a son-in-law, and filled him, on the contrary, with hatred and suspicion of him. It shamed his pride that circumstances had reduced him to mingle the blood of the Visconti with that of a peasant; and he could see only in the hero Sforza, an upstart to disgrace his dynasty as a successor, or to hurl him from his throne as a rival. On the application of Alfonso, he did not attempt to dissuade Sforza from his expedition against that monarch: but he dispatched Niccolo Piccinino with a formidable body of gens-d'armerie into Romagna; he wrote to Eugenius IV. that the time was come for his recovery of the March of Ancona; and he offered him the services of his general and his troops for the purpose. The pope was at once seduced by self-interest to accept the proposal; and it was

for this, that he basely sacrificed the man who had served him, that he deserted the Angevin prince whose cause he had espoused, and that he accomplished the ruin of Regnier by diverting the arms of Sforza to his own defence.

His gallant defence and reverses.

The valiant son of the peasant of Cotignola now found himself the devoted object of a hostile league, which embraced three of the greatest powers of Italy: the pope, the king of Naples, and the duke of Milan. Assailed as he was from all quarters, he defended the fortunes, to which his own and his father's adventurous courage and talents had raised him, with admirable spirit. He shewed a front to his various enemies wherever they appeared, he repeatedly fought and defeated them in detail, his master-mind and his presence seemed to be given simultaneously to every point of danger. But his resources were too unequal to those of his oppressors, to render it possible for him to maintain so continued and adverse a struggle. He had full occasion to discover the difference between making war as a condottiere in the pay of others, and being reduced to defend his own possessions; and the progress of the war palpably betrayed the weakness of the little military monarchy which he had founded. The country was devoured by his own soldiery and ravaged by the enemy; the contributions by which he ruined his people were still utterly insufficient to maintain his troops; and his subjects, bound to him by no hereditary affection or ties of honor and patriotism, every where revolted. In less than four years, he was completely

CHAP. VI. PART II. 1446

stripped of every fief in the Neapolitan territories, and of the whole of the March of Ancona. At one period indeed some remorse appeared to have seized Filippo Maria for his oppression of his son-in-law, and his interference arrested the fall of Sforza. But this interval of compunction was shortly succeeded by a new paroxysm of suspicion and enmity; and the duke was himself the mover of a new league against Sforza which completed his spoliation. His enemies seemed resolved to leave him no spot whereon to repose his weary head. Alfonso and the pope had already wrested from him all that he had possessed in central and southern Italy, and the parent of his wife now endeavoured to perfect his ruin and to seize upon his only remaining territory of Cremona, which he had himself assigned to him for the dowry of Bianca. But this attempt at length determined the republics of Florence and Venice to arm against Filippo Maria; and gave to Sforza at least the means of supporting his bands in employment.

Sforza succoured by Venice and Florence. War of the republics against the duke of Milan.

The republics of Venice and Florence were not ignorant that the maintenance of the balance of Italy, against the alliance of the king of Naples and the duke of Milan, required that Sforza should be supported; and they were aware that even their own safety would be compromised by his destruction. Besides the very large sums which the personal friendship of Cosmo de' Medici contributed to the wants of Sforza from his private purse, the republics had from time to time as-

sisted that general with considerable subsidies, and ineffectually employed their good offices in his behalf. But from one cause or other they had too long delayed to declare openly in his favor, until Filippo Maria, by his attack upon Cremona, violated the peace of Martinengo which they had expressly guaranteed. They then armed with vigour, and war was again kindled in Lombardy. Besides dispatching succours to Sforza, who still hovered about the March of Ancona, the allied republics successfully undertook for him the relief of Cremona. At Casal Maggiore, between that city and Parma, the Venetian generalissimo gained so complete a victory over the Milanese forces, that all the country from the Adda to the Oglio with its fortresses at once submitted to the conqueror. The Venetian army even carried their ravages to the gates of Milan; and Filippo Maria, trembling within his capital, once more changed his inconstant politics. The war had been occasioned solely by his hatred of his son-in-law, and his determination to ruin him: yet it was to Sforza himself that he now recurred for protection. He implored him to defend the destined inheritance of his wife against his own ally. It was far from the design of Sforza, that the ambitious republic should wrest from Filippo Maria provinces which he hoped himself to possess; and he had already listened to the overtures of his father-in-law, when the Venetian senate, who suspected his fidelity, commissioned their general to surprise and occupy his city of Cremona. The

CHAP. VI. PART II.

attempt failed by the vigilance of the governor, and this abortive perfidy at once determined Sforza to accept the proposals of his father-in-law. He actively commenced preparations for opening the campaign in his cause; but the duke was still unable to divest himself of suspicious fear and jealous dislike of him. He wavered, and ordered him not to enter his dominions; and it was not until the enemy had penetrated within three miles of Milan, that he finally summoned him without reservation to his aid. Sforza immediately concentrated his army, and commenced his march from Romagna into Lombardy. He had just reached the village of Cotignola, from whence he derived his origin, when the intelligence was brought to him that Filippo Maria, whose health had long been declining, had suddenly expired of dysentery.

Death of the duke Filippo Maria. 1447

The people of Milan establish a republic.

The death of the duke Filippo Maria Visconti, the last sovereign of his house, seemed the commencement of a new æra in the condition of Milan and of all central Lombardy. The council of his ministers, which assembled immediately after his death, was agitated by different interests. Sforza was not without his partizans, who advocated the natural succession of the husband of Bianca to the states of her father; but the principal leaders of the school of Braccio, among whom the two sons of Niccolo Piccinino had now, since his death, acquired most influence, were adverse to the elevation of the chieftain of the rival military faction. They declared in the council against Sforza, and

in favor of Alfonso king of the Sicilies, in virtue of a real or pretended testament of the late duke; and their influence prevailed. A lieutenant of Alfonso, who had conducted a small auxiliary force into Lombardy, was admitted into the citadel and the castle of Milan, and the banner of his sovereign was displayed from their ramparts. But the nobles and principal citizens of Milan, who had so long been oppressed by a race of tyrants, were not disposed to bow their necks to a new yoke at the will of a council of ministers. They called the people to arms, they barricaded the streets of the capital, and blockaded the citadel and castle. The citizens of Milan were then assembled in a general parliament; and a republican constitution was framed under a supreme executive council to be renewed, like that of Florence, every two months. The few troops of Alfonso, separated by many hundred miles from the armies of their monarch, were shortly terrified into a surrender of the fortresses which they held. The government of the people was established in the capital; and the condottieri, who had served the ducal state under Filippo Maria, generally engaged their fidelity to the new republic.

Their numerous enemies.

The people of Milan, however, had not succeeded to the power of their late duke. The authority of their republic was scarcely acknowledged beyond their own walls; almost every city of the duchy claimed an equal right with the capital to govern itself; Pavia, Tortona, Parma and other towns erected themselves into repub-

lics; and all Lombardy was filled with revolt and anarchy. Meanwhile numerous foreign enemies threatened the new government of the capital. Though the hostility of Florence had subsided into indifference, the Venetians eagerly extended their conquests in central Lombardy. The duke of Savoy, the marquis of Montferrat, the Genoese, and the marquis of Este, assailed the possessions of Filippo Maria on opposite frontiers by intrigues or by arms; the duke of Orleans, who owed his birth to the marriage of his father with Valentine Visconti, daughter of Gian Galeazzo, declared his right to the dominions of his uncle; and finally, Alfonso, king of the Sicilies, threatened the assertion of his pretensions. Thus oppressed and menaced from every quarter, the new Milanese republic, distrustful of the projects of Francesco Sforza, yet dreading his open assaults, could discover no better policy, than to avert his hostility by taking him into pay and employing his formidable bands against other enemies.

Sforza enters their service.

On the death of Filippo Maria, Sforza who had first lost all his states, except Cremona, by the enmity of that prince, and then forfeited the alliance of the Venetians to reconcile himself with him, had nothing left but his personal fame and talents, the command of veteran bands, and a very questionable claim to inherit the states of his father-in-law. He therefore gladly accepted the offer of the Milanese government to take him into their pay, upon the same conditions, and for the defence of the same country, as he had agreed upon with

the late duke. But Sforza had in no degree laid aside his hopes and projects of acquiring the ducal crown. In entering the service of the new republic, he had still the same end in view; and he steadily continued the pursuit of a faithless policy which, with self-interest for its only spring of action, disregarded every law of morality and shamelessly violated the most solemn obligation of oaths. His whole conduct was a practical illustration of those detestable principles, which Machiavel has embodied into his celebrated treatise; and yet the man, who might have afforded the model after which the great Florentine sketched the character of his prince, had a fairer and a higher fame than almost any of the distinguished personages of the same age and country. He was the private friend of Cosmo de' Medici, and of several princes of the houses of Este, and Gonzaga, and Montefeltro, whose protection of letters and art shed a brilliant lustre over their times and themselves. Sforza was at least equal to these his illustrious associates in virtue; he was faithful, devoted, and liberal in his private affections. With what indignation and disgust must we then contemplate the political morality of an age, which taught the hero of elevated mind and generous feeling to know no other disgrace, than that of failure in the struggle of injustice and duplicity.

His victories,

Francesco Sforza had no sooner united his veteran bands to the old gens-d'armerie of Filippo Maria than he every where turned the tide of success. The new republic of Parma was

CHAP. VI. PART II.

terrified by his approach to submit to that of Milan; the people of Pavia and Tortona, to the great jealousy of the Milanese, bestowed the sovereignty of their cities on Sforza himself; and the French force which was acting for the duke of Orleans in western Lombardy was totally defeated: —though not without a previous carnage so unusual in these bloodless wars, as to strike the Italian conquerors with terrific impressions of the ferocity of these ultramontane enemies. Meanwhile the Venetians, since their victory at Casal Maggiore, had spread their conquering troops over so extensive a tract of country, that they were unable to assemble in force at any single point, and this dispersion had all the consequences of a defeat. Sforza, after other successes sat down before Placentia, then, next to Milan, the largest city in Lombardy. His artillery laid the walls open with a rapidity which gave an earnest of a total change in the relations of the science of attack and defence; and, notwithstanding the obstinate resistance of a numerous garrison, his troops, to the surprise of the age, entered the place through the breach by a general assault. This important blow was followed, in the next campaign, by the recovery of many castles which the Venetians had conquered on the Adda; by the capture and destruction of the whole of a large fleet which they had sent up the Po; and by the total rout of their army at Caravaggio.

1448

and treachery.

Francesco Sforza was conscious that he now approached the goal of his ambition: he had re-

covered the possessions of Milan from the hands of the Venetians and invaded their provinces; he had hitherto succeeded, by the arts of his numerous agents at Milan, in exciting clamour against proposals for a peace, which was equally desirable for that republic and for Venice; and he had sufficiently humiliated the Venetians. He perceived that the termination of hostilities was at hand; he dreaded a pacification between the belligerents; and he saw that the time had arrived for preventing it and accomplishing his purposes, by changing his party. Notwithstanding the suspicions of the Milanese government, he had with consummate address veiled the real extent of his designs; and he now, one-and-thirty days only after his victory at Caravaggio, secretly concluded a treaty with the Venetians, by which he agreed to evacuate their territory and make some cessions to them, and they engaged in return to assist him in ascending the throne of Filippo Maria. He then assembled his troops; he declared to them that the Milanese republic had ungratefully resolved to deprive him of Pavia and Cremona, and to rob them of the fruits of their victories; and he proclaimed his schemes of vengeance and his new alliance with Venice. His mercenary bands needed little incentive to any enterprise of which booty was to be the reward; and he led them, in concert with a Venetian force, against the state whose pay they were receiving.

He leagues with the Venetians against his employers.

The permanent revival of a republic in the centre of Lombardy might have fortified and up-

CHAP. VI. PART II.

held the cause of freedom in the peninsula; and a just and enlightened policy should have impelled both Florence and Venice to support the new liberties of the Milanese. But Florence was influenced by the private partiality of Cosmo de' Medici, and secretly favored the projects of Sforza; and Venice was swayed by selfish ambition to league against the rising commonwealth. The first emotion of the public mind at Milan at the defection of Sforza was indignation at his perfidy; the next feeling was the necessity of vigorous preparation for resisting his detestable yoke. The rulers of the people garrisoned their fortresses; they levied a numerous militia and equipped them with muskets, and this arm, which had yet been little used, at first struck terror into their enemies. But experience had now betrayed the imperfection of the means of defence, which the fortresses of the times could oppose to the assaults of artillery. The garrisons of the Milanese were rapidly reduced; while, notwithstanding the panic created by the novel employment of small fire-arms, their defective construction would admit only of a tardy discharge, and was neither assisted by the modern invention of the bayonet or the use of the puissant pike. The Milanese generals dared not lead their undisciplined militia against a veteran gens-d'armerie; and the army of Sforza, approaching the capital, invested it by a rigid blockade.

1449

Dissensions at Milan.

Meanwhile the people of Milan had evinced their unfitness for the enjoyment of freedom.

Ages of subjection to the tyranny of the Visconti had long extinguished the spirit that had once inspired their ancestors of Legnano. The late revolution failed in developing the energies of any master-mind, and guided by no leaders worthy of the crisis, they were torn by furious dissensions and plunged in intestine commotion. Although Venice, repenting of her share in the aggrandizement of Sforza, and expecting no farther advantage from his alliance, now made peace with the Milanese republic, and even began to act hostilely against her former confederate, her succour came too late to avert the ruin of the new commonwealth. Sforza pursued the siege of Milan with unshaken determination; his skilful operations prevented any attempt for the relief of the city; and the numerous populace, after enduring all the horrors of famine, were at last driven to revolt against their rulers. The gates of Milan were thrown open, and Sforza, whose name had lately been breathed only with execration, was welcomed to the capital of his principality by the acclamations of the inconstant and joyful multitude. The whole states of Filippo Maria immediately submitted to his authority; and his coronation was celebrated with royal magnificence. The Florentines sent an embassy of their most distinguished citizens to congratulate him on his accession; and the states of Italy in general acknowledged the title of the new duke of Milan.—Francesco Sforza had thus attained the summit of grandeur,

The city besieged by Sforza,

declares in his favor.

Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan. 1450

CHAP. VI. PART II.

which his bold and unscrupulous ambition had projected. No subsequent reverses were to cloud the splendour of his own fortunes; and he could not penetrate the veil of futurity to discover, that the toil, and danger, and perfidy, by which he had dearly founded the aggrandizement of his descendants, were to produce only for them a gloomy consummation of misery and crime. *

RISE OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY. —1450

The importance of a new power, which had gradually been encreasing on the western frontiers of the Milanese states, takes its date from the beginning of the fifteenth century; and I may conveniently append to the present chapter some account of the rise of a dynasty, which had already established over Piedmont a sovereignty destined to endure to our times. The origin of the house of Savoy is buried in obscurity; and the history of the part of Italy over which its authority was gradually extended, has been far less successfully explored than that of any other province of the peninsula. Muratori, the most indefatigable and learned of Italian antiquaries, is repeatedly compelled to acknowledge, that the mode in which the transalpine chieftains of Savoy superseded the great feudatories of Susa and Ivrea has baffled his enquiry; and the affairs of Pied-

* Raynaldi, Annal. Eccles. A.D. 1431—1447. Marin Sanuto, Vite de' Duchi di Venez. (Francesco Foscari) pp. 1111—1137. Macchiavelli, Ist. Fior. b. vi. pp. 186—235. Johannis Simonetæ, Rer. Gest. Fr. Sfortiæ ad p. 603. (Scrip. Rer. Ital. vol. xxi.). Sismondi, cc. 71—73.

RISE OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY. —1450

mont in the middle ages have neither been developed, like those of Lombardy and Tuscany, by numerous contemporary chroniclers, nor very frequently illustrated by modern research. But, if we know little of the annals of Piedmont, and of the early memoirs of its present sovereigns, we have probably not much to regret. There is, in no degree, reason to attribute to this part of our subject the same interest with the long tragedy of Lombardy, the maritime glories of Venice, or the magnanimous spirit and intellectual splendour of Florence.

Its origin—The counts of Maurienne

The house of Savoy derives its descent from the counts of Maurienne, a petty lordship in the Savoyard valley, which is watered by the little river of Arc. If their genealogist Guichenon be correct, the first of these chieftains was a German prince of the imperial line of Saxony, who, at the end of the tenth century, obtained his fief by service to Rodolph III., king of Burgundy. About a hundred years later, Otho, the fourth in descent from this founder of his line, married the daughter of the last marquis of Susa, and is supposed to have inherited great part of his possessions. From this period the counts of Maurienne began gradually to extend their sovereignty over all Savoy; and, at the end of the eleventh century, may perhaps also with safety be dated the first foundation of their power on the Italian side of the Alps. Here their elevation was long repressed by the jealousy of the civic states of Piedmont, and by the rivalry of the great chieftains of the

and of Savoy.

Commencement of their power in Piedmont.

CHAP. VI. PART II.

RISE OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY. —1450

State of that province before the fifteenth century.

province, the principal of whom were the marquisses of Montferrat, and Saluzzo. These princes, and the counts of Savoy themselves, subjugated or swallowed up inferior lordships, and engrossed most of the rural territories of Piedmont. Turin, Asti, Vercelli, and other cities of the province, which appear in the twelfth century to have gained a republican freedom, much in the same manner as those of Lombardy, fell also like them in the following age, by the effects of their vicious dissensions. In the factions of the thirteenth century, the counts of Savoy mingled in Italian politics as favorers of the imperial interests and of the Ghibelin party. In the beginning of this age they seized, under the imperial banner, upon Turin their future capital. The citizens, however, did not tamely submit to their yoke; they frequently revolted; and they even defeated the count Boniface I. and took him prisoner. After a long series of alternate resistance and submission, it was not until about the middle of the fourteenth century, that the people of Turin and other Piedmontese cities finally reposed, from the incessant struggles of faction, in obedience to the counts of Savoy.

Piedmont under the dominion of the counts of Savoy.

Under Amadeus VI., whose long reign of thirty-nine years terminated in 1383, the Italian states of the counts of Savoy assumed a regular consolidation. Amadeus, who acquired the sirname of the Comte-Verd from the colour of his arms, was one of the greatest characters of his house. Besides receiving the voluntary submis-

sion of the cities of Piedmont, he obliged all the petty signors of the province to acknowledge his sovereignty; he obtained from Louis I. of Anjou, as count of Provence, the renunciation of his claims over Piedmont, in return for the aid which he gave that prince in his Neapolitan expedition; and the house of Savoy now acquired a decided preponderance over the marquisates of Montferrat and Saluzzo.* The fortunate reign of the Comte-Verd prepared the entrance of his family among the crowned heads of Europe. His son's life was short; but his grandson, Amadeus VIII., after a tranquil minority found himself, at the opening of the fifteenth century, possessor of Savoy and of almost all Piedmont. To his transalpine dominions he annexed by purchase the county of Geneva; and, on the side of Lombardy, he made considerable acquisitions of territory on the dismemberment of the Milanese states after the death of Gian Galeazzo, and during the troubled reign of Filippo Maria. The possessions of Amadeus VIII. were also swelled by the extinction of collateral branches of his family. A century and a half earlier, the power of the house of Savoy had been checked in its growth by a division of its territory among three brothers and their heirs; but Amadeus VIII. now became the sole representative of his dynasty. The simple

* Both these princely families ended in the early part of the sixteenth century: that of Saluzzo became extinct; and the inheritance of that of Montferrat lapsed into the house of Gonzaga.

CHAP. VI. PART II.

RISE OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY. —1450

Amadeus VIII. first duke of his house.

1416

title of count was no longer suitable either to his dignity or the extent of his dominion; *and he* obtained from the emperor Sigismund letters patent which elevated his states into an imperial duchy. The policy was simple and enlightened which taught the new duke of Savoy, as an Italian prince, to regard the alliance of Florence and Venice as a protection against the superior force of the Visconti, and as a barrier against aggression from Germany; and he profited by the successes of the republics against Filippo Maria. It was this Amadeus VIII., the first duke of Savoy, who after retiring, on the death of his wife, from the world in grief or disgust, was seduced by the council of Basle to accept a disputed tiara, and to endure its aggravated cares for about nine years; when he himself convoked a council to witness his resignation of a wearisome dignity, and withdrew again to the retirement in which he died. His son Louis, who had succeeded to the duchy of Savoy on his abdication, and whose reign continued beyond the middle of the century, was a prince of inferior qualities. But he encreased his possessions after the death of Filippo Maria of Milan, by first opposing Sforza in his war with the Milanese republic, and then obtaining from that prince before his final success a considerable cession of territory, as the price of his alliance. The dukes of Savoy thenceforth were to mingle in all the political combinations of the peninsula; but we shall not discover any farther important increase to their power for se-

1439

RISE OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY. —1450

veral ages, for their decided ascendancy over the destiny of Italy was the work of later times. They have risen with her fall, and triumphed in her disgrace; and the consummation of their royal ambition has been coeval with the bitterest years of her servitude. *

* The materials for this slight account of the rise of the house of Savoy have been gathered generally from its well known genealogical history by Guichenon, from Muratori, and from Denina (Istoria dell' Italia Occidentale):—but it would be an idle pedantry to make a formal reference to particular passages, spread over these voluminous writers, for a rapid sketch of five pages. Perhaps the reader will for once be content to receive its general correctness upon trust.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY, TO THE ENTRANCE INTO ITALY OF CHARLES VIII., KING OF FRANCE. A.D. 1450—1494.

PART I.

Change in the System of Italian Alliances, on the Accession of Francesco Sforza to the Milanese Throne—League of Alfonso of Naples and Venice, against the Duke of Milan and Florence —General War in Italy—Capture of Constantinople by the Turks—Consternation and Danger of Italy—Peace of Lodi—Quadruple League of Naples, Milan, Florence, and Venice—Pontificate of Nicholas V.—Abortive Conspiracy of Stefano Porcari—Incessant Troubles and Revolutions of Genoa—War of Alfonso of Naples against the Republic—His Death and Character—Unpopularity of his Son Ferdinand—The Barons of Naples offer their Crown to the House of Anjou—Obstinate Civil War in their Kingdom between the Parties of Anjou and Aragon—Share of other Italian Powers in the Contest—Final Triumph of Ferdinand—General Repose of Italy—Affairs of Venice—Story of the Foscari—Institution of the Inquisitors of State—Danger of Venice from the Growth of the Ottoman Power —War between the Republic and the Turks—Crusade projected by Pope Pius II. against the Infidels—His Death—Pope Paul II.—Conquest of Negropont by the Turks—Alarm of Italy—League against the Infidels—Its abortive Results—Entrance of the Turks into Italy—Close of the War between Venice and the

Ottomans—The Genoese lose their Possessions in the Black Sea —Acquisition of Cyprus by the Venetians.

CHAP. VII. PART I.

Change in the system of Italian alliances, on the accession of Francesco Sforza to the Milanese throne. 1450

THE elevation of Francesco Sforza to the ducal throne of Milan changed the whole system of Italian alliances. Alfonso of Aragon had been bound by the ties of interest, if not of personal regard and gratitude, to Filippo Maria; and during the life-time of that duke, a firm and intimate union had subsisted between Naples and Milan: while on the other hand the republics of Florence and Venice had been driven, by the restless designs of Filippo Maria, to coalesce against him for their mutual defence, and for the maintenance of the political balance of Italy. But the accession of Sforza to the crown of the Visconti placed these four leading powers of the peninsula, Naples, Milan, Florence, and Venice, in new and opposite relations to each other. Alfonso still regarded Sforza only as the partizan of the house of Anjou, and, consequently, as his personal enemy. In depriving him of his fiefs in the kingdom of Naples, he felt that he had given him reason to cherish feelings of exasperation and vengeance on his new throne; and he desired to anticipate him in the contest of mutual injuries.

The connection between Florence and Venice was as much severed, as that between Milan and Naples. The paramount influence of Cosmo de' Medici—the warm personal friend of Sforza—over the counsels of Florence, had thrown that republic completely into the party of the new duke, and occasioned her to form a close alliance with Milan.

CHAP. VII. PART I.

But Venice was still bent upon schemes of continental aggrandizement in Lombardy, and enraged at her sister republic for having thwarted her purposes, by privately aiding Sforza with subsidies. She saw in that prince a far more dangerous neighbour and formidable antagonist than his predecessors, and divided her enmity almost equally between him and Florence, who had favored his elevation. The king of Naples had but lately been at war with both the republics. By some aggressions in Tuscany in 1447, he had provoked the Florentines to a contest, with the languid and uninteresting operations of which I have not thought it necessary to occupy the attention of the reader; and some commercial disputes had also led to naval hostilities between the Venetians and his subjects. Both these unimportant wars were terminated by negociation at the period before us; and Alfonso discovered not only a ready means of reconciliation with the Venetians, but a desirable occasion of confederating with them, in the animosity which they bore to his enemy Sforza and to the Florentines.

League of Alfonso of Naples and Venice, against the duke of

Since the entrance of Sforza into Milan, the hostile operations, which the Venetians had carried on against him, seemed to have expired in the common exhaustion of the combatants, and under the dreadful ravages of a pestilence which broke out in Lombardy. But an offensive league was now formed by the king of Naples and the Venetians, against the duke of Milan and the Florentines. The contracting parties endeavoured to

Milan and Florence. 1451

engage the secondary states of the peninsula in their alliance; and Louis, duke of Savoy, and the marquis of Montferrat were easily induced, by the hope of new acquisitions, to join the confederates against Sforza. Both the reigning families of Este and Gonzaga were at this epoch more honorably distinguished by their passion for literature and art, and by the intellectual splendour with which they invested their courts, than by the share which they took in Italian politics. Borso of Este, who had just succeeded his brother, the marquis Lionel, in the states of Ferrara and Modena, steadily maintained his neutrality; but Louis III., marquis of Mantua, embraced the alliance of Sforza. Notwithstanding the Venetian intrigues, the communities of Sienna and Bologna also remained firm in the alliance of Florence; and that republic, now perceiving the hostile temper of Venice, seriously prepared for war, and cemented an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the duke of Milan.

While the league between the king of Naples and the Venetians was thus exciting a general war in Italy, and developing the political affections of her various states, the commencement of hostilities was for a short time retarded by the entrance into Lombardy of the emperor Frederic III. * To receive the crown of the empire at

* The emperor Sigismund dying in 1438, had been succeeded by Albert II. of Austria, a prince whom the Germans number among their best sovereigns, but whose short

CHAP. VII. PART I.

Rome, appeared to be the only object of Frederic, an insignificant and feeble prince. He arrived in Italy without an army, he quitted it immediately after his coronation; and as the last Italian expedition of the emperor Sigismund had absolutely produced not a single occurrence worthy of notice, beyond the sale of the dignity of marquis to the family of Gonzaga, so this visit of Frederic deserves to be remembered only as the occasion on which the ducal crown was conferred on the house of Este. Frederic III. invested the marquis Borso with the title of duke of Modena and Reggio. These states were regarded as fiefs of the empire; but that of Ferrara was supposed to be held of the Holy See; and it was not until nineteen years later, that this most ancient possession of the house of Este, and the capital of their dominions, was erected by pope Paul II. into a duchy in their favor.

General war in Italy. 1452

Just as Frederic III. was withdrawing from Italy after the ceremonial of his coronation, the senate of Venice declared war against the duke of Milan; and shortly afterwards the king of Naples commenced hostilities against the republic of Florence. Both Tuscany and Lombardy immediately became the theatre of warlike operations. Into the former province, Alfonso dispatched an army to attack the Florentines under the command of his natural

reign has no connection with Italian history. It was on his death, in 1439, that his cousin Frederic III. was raised to the imperial throne.

son Ferdinand, and entrusted the guidance of this prince, whom he destined for his successor, to Federigo di Montefeltro, count of Urbino in Romagna, one of the most able warriors and accomplished characters of his age. But, from whatever cause, the campaign in Tuscany produced little fruit. The army of Ferdinand was unaccompanied by artillery, and the whole Neapolitan strength was vainly consumed in the siege of a few petty Florentine castles. The operations in Lombardy were not more decisive. Sforza, attacked on opposite frontiers by the troops of Savoy and Montferrat, and by the Venetians, opposed his enemies with an equality of force which balanced the fortune of the contest; and, as usual in the inglorious warfare of the times, we meet with a total dearth of all interest. The second year of the war was equally barren in events of importance; and, although the armies employed in Lombardy were so numerous that nearly forty thousand cuirassiers were brought into the field, not a single action of consequence was fought. The Florentines succeeded by their negociations and subsidies in inducing old Regnier of Anjou, the former rival of Alfonso of Naples, to lead an army across the Alps to reinforce Sforza in Lombardy; but the impetuous chivalry of France were soon wearied of the systematic protraction of Italian hostilities; and after a service of a few months, the followers of Regnier, who himself shared their impatience, induced him to re-conduct them to their country.

1453

CHAP. VII. PART I.

Capture of Constantinople by the Turks.

The indecisive character and ruinous expenditure of the war had already moderated the animosity of the contending powers of Italy, when the intelligence of the fall of Constantinople before the arms of Mahomet II., struck consternation into Europe, and excited general remorse for the callous neglect, which had abandoned to destruction the most ancient empire of Christendom. The sentiment of religious sympathy for the fate of the vanquished Greeks was combined with horror at the merciless butcheries of their infidel conquerors, and with appalling presages of the universal dominion of the Turks. To the powers of Italy the danger was imminent: the empire of the crescent was established at the eastern gates of Europe, and seemed already to menace and overshadow the peninsula with impending ruin. A congress was summoned to meet at Rome under the presidency of the pope, Nicholas V.; and all the belligerent states eagerly expressed their desire for the restoration of peace, that their united forces might be directed against the general enemy. But when their deputies had assembled, it was soon manifested by their exaggerated pretensions, how weak was the sense of common peril, or the generous desire of delivering the eastern Christians, when opposed to the selfishness of individual interests. The pope himself is accused of having endeavoured to perpetuate the quarrel of the Italian states, whose distractions prevented their interference with the repose of his own dominions; and it became altogether evident that

Consternation and danger of Italy.

1454

no accommodation could be wrought at the congress. But Florence nevertheless had no particular object in continuing the war; and two at least of the other contending parties sincerely desired a pacification. Sforza had reached the highest point of his ambition; his excellent sense taught him that he had no farther aggrandizement to expect; and he was intent only upon bequeathing to his dynasty the secure possession of the Milanese states. Himself originally a condottiere, he was perfectly versed in the treacherous principles which actuated the mercenary leaders and their bands; and the experience of his own successful projects was in itself an alarming warning of the danger which he, as a prince, might in turn incur from the faithless ambition of these adventurers. Peace could alone preserve his resources from their rapacity, and enable him to dispense with their services, and to crush the fatal system by which they existed. Venice was at length awakened, by the successes of Mahomet II., to a conviction of the perilous condition in which her scattered dependencies in the east were placed by the terrific growth of the Turkish power. The late operations in Lombardy left besides little hope to the republic of farther acquisitions on the continent of Italy.

The pacific inclinations of Sforza were under these circumstances shared by the Venetian senate; negociations were secretly opened; and Italy was suddenly surprised by the conclusion of

CHAP. VII. PART I.

Peace of Lodi.

a peace at Lodi between Venice and Milan, to which the other belligerents were invited to accede. The terms of the treaty provided only for some inconsiderable regulations of territory, and the minor powers, respectively in hostility to the two states, were easily compelled to submit to the equitable conditions imposed on them. Florence herself not only assented cheerfully to the pacification, but signed a defensive league with Milan and Venice for the maintenance of the public repose. The king of Naples alone, indignant that, as the principal monarch of the peninsula, he had not been consulted in the negociations at Lodi, and still desirous of obliging Florence to reimburse him for the charges of the war, for some time delayed his acquiescence in the general peace. But the signature of the new alliance of Milan and the two republics shook his resolution; and he had besides an important object to gain by accepting its intentions. He had no legitimate offspring, and the kingdoms to which he had succeeded by regular inheritance would necessarily devolve on a collateral branch of the Aragonese dynasty; but the crown of Naples, which he had acquired by his own ability and courage, he was desirous of leaving to his natural son Ferdinand. By interchanging with the leading states of Italy a mutual obligation of defence, he farther looked to obtain an implied recognition of the rights of Ferdinand to his succession on the Neapolitan throne. He therefore at length yielded his accession to the

peace of Lodi; and under the guarantee of the pope, a quadruple league was then formed between the sovereigns of Naples and Milan, and the republics of Florence and Venice, for the preservation of tranquillity in Italy. *

Quadruple league of Naples, Milan, Florence, and Venice. 1455

The sovereign pontiff who mingled in these negociations was, as I have before mentioned, Nicholas V. The reign of this pope, who had succeeded Eugenius IV. in 1447, is however chiefly remarkable for his zealous patronage of letters, and as the æra of the last abortive effort for the establishment of republican freedom in the ancient capital of the universe. Nicholas V. was the son of an obscure physician of Sarzana, and while only himself a poor priest, had displayed an ardent passion for the recovery of the relics of classical literature. His industrious learning and talents procured for him the friendship of Cosmo de' Medici, and excited the attention of his ecclesiastical superiors. After a long service in inferior stations, Eugenius IV. attached him to his person; and he then rose in twelve months to the highest dignities of the church. On the death of Eugenius at Rome, one of those sudden and capricious accidents, which have so often determined the votes of the conclave, elevated the new cardinal to the chair of St. Peter; and, by the influence

Pontificate of Nicholas V. 1447—1455

* Macchiavelli, Ist. Fior. b. vi. pp. 235—256. Poggio Bracciolini, Ist. Fior. b. viii. p. 424, to the end of this elegant work, which terminates with the conclusion of the quadruple league of 1455. Johannis Simonetæ. Rer. Gest. Sfortiæ, pp. 603—674. Muratori, Annali, A.D. 1450—55.

of his personal character, his reign was shortly signalized by the extinction of the schism caused by the council of Basle. He persuaded the antipope, Amadeus of Savoy, to resign his pretensions to the tiara, and admitted him, with the cardinals of his creation, into the sacred college. During a pontificate of eight years, Nicholas proved himself a splendid and munificent patron of learning. The papal court was crowded with men of letters who were fostered by his bounty; the Vatican library was founded, and above five thousand ancient manuscripts were collected by his care; and a greater number of the Greek classics were translated into Latin by his command during the brief remnant of his life, than in the five centuries which had preceded his elevation. His patronage of the arts was not less distinguished: the venerable monuments of the capital were preserved and cherished by his enthusiastic admiration; the sacred edifices of Rome and of the other cities of his states were repaired and embellished; and the erection of many superb structures at once attested his magnificent spirit and the purity of his taste.

The political administration of Nicholas V. was not calculated to support the fair fame of his intellectual qualities. His arbitrary measures and the cruelties, into which he was hurried by his fears of popular commotion, have fastened upon his memory a reproach of mingled tyranny and weakness, for which a palliation will vainly be sought either in his mere restoration of the vo-

lumes of antiquity, or in the splendour of his architectural works. Notwithstanding the insurrection of 1433, by which the citizens of Rome had compelled Eugenius IV. to seek safety in flight, and effected a transient revival of their republican institutions, they had shortly fallen again under the tyrannical authority of that pontiff; and at the epoch of his death, they found themselves absolutely divested of all the privileges of freemen. The interregnum, which necessarily preceded the election of his successor, appeared a favorable occasion for the assertion of their public rights. It was in an assembly of the citizens at this juncture, that Stefano Porcari, a Roman of noble birth and spotless character, first raised himself to notice by his ardent aspirations after freedom. His mind was heated by the writings of Petrarch,* and perhaps by the desire of emulating the career of Rienzi, whose vivid imagination and impassioned eloquence seemed in some measure to have descended upon him. But his exertions proved less fortunate or powerful than those of the celebrated tribune. He eagerly exposed before his assembled fellow citizens the de-

* Porcari was the victim of a singular delusion, which however quite accords with the opinions of his times, when the power of penetrating into futurity was generally believed to attend great intellectual acquirements. He was persuaded that Petrarch had possessed this gift; that the poet had shadowed him out as the future deliverer of Rome; and that it was to him that, with a prophetic spirit, he had addressed the celebrated canzone —"Spirto gentil che quelle membra reggi," &c.—Macchiavelli, Ist. Fior. b. vi. p. 246.

gradation of their state; he endeavoured to fire them by the exclamation, that there was no enslaved and petty community so abject, as not to watch the moment of a tyrant's death, to deliver themselves from bondage; and he exhorted his countrymen to seize the opportunity of imposing a constitutional charter upon the future pope. But all his efforts to rouse the Roman people to a kindred spirit with his own were unavailing; they produced no resolution in the assembly; and, as their only result, Porcari was denounced to the new pontiff as a dangerous character. The suspicion already excited against him was strengthened by the continuance of his projects for the establishment of liberty at Rome; and his interference at some public games, in a slight riot to which he strove to give a political object, furnished the cause for a papal sentence against him of exile to Bologna.

Nicholas V., whose life of personal servitude had taught him only the despotic relation between master and dependant, was resolved to exact from his subjects an obedience as unlimited as that which he had himself been accustomed to yield to his superiors. But if the arbitrary principles which thus regulated his government were to be maintained, his banishment of Porcari was apparently a lenient sentence. Yet it only provoked the continued prosecution of the designs which had occasioned it. In his exile Porcari brooded over the disgraceful submission of the city of his birth, the once mighty capital of antiquity, to the

Abortive conspiracy of Stefano Porcari. 1453

yoke of a slothful priesthood; and his distempered fancy blinded him to the truth, that the hour for restoring the fallen majesty of Rome was for ever past. He imprudently formed a conspiracy which was equally extravagant and hopeless: his intentions, says Macchiavel coldly, might be commended by some, but his judgment must be censured by all. He secretly returned to Rome, and in concert with his nephew and a few bold associates who shared his enthusiasm, and whom he had summoned to meet him at his own house, prepared to seize the persons of the pope and cardinals, and to use them as hostages for obtaining the surrender of the city gates and the castle of St. Angelo. But even while Porcari was deliberating with the conspirators, he was betrayed. The senator of Rome, receiving notice of an unusual assemblage at the house of the exile, surrounded it with his soldiery. The conspirators were attacked and overpowered; some of them escaped; but Porcari himself was taken on the spot, and the pope condemned him to death without even the formality of a trial. Together with nine of his associates he was hanged, in less than twenty-four hours after his capture, from the battlements of St. Angelo; and thus miserably perished the last of the champions of Roman liberty, —the victims of the illusions of ancient glory.

Nicholas V. was persuaded that the conspirators had desired his life, and he became from this period at once as timid and ferocious, as he had be-

CHAP. VII. PART I. 1454

fore been confiding and mild. The punishment of Porcari was followed by continual and iniquitous executions. As many of the conspirators who had taken refuge in other states, as the pope could induce the different governments to deliver up to him, were put to death; and several other persons suffered capitally, who were either wholly innocent, or upon whom no more than the bare suspicion had fallen of a distant implication in the late plot. Yet amidst these sanguinary proceedings, Nicholas bore a mind ill at peace with itself; he did not very long survive the reign of terror which he had established; and in his last days he wept bitterly, while he declared that he had found no man to approach him with the language of truth. He was succeeded on the papal throne by the cardinal Alfonso Borgia, a Spaniard of advanced age, who assumed the title of Calixtus III. By the elevation of his family, this pontiff prepared an infamous celebrity for their name, and rendered the extinction of the last spark of freedom at Rome, nearly coeval with the establishment of the most odious race of her tyrants. *

1455

Incessant troubles and revolutions of Genoa.

Though the peace of Lodi and the quadruple league which followed had the happy effects of tranquillizing Italy in general, no respite from suffering was yielded by these treaties to one of the few surviving republics of the peninsula.

* Vespasiano, Vita di Papa Niccola. (Scrip. Rer. Ital. vol. xxv.) Leonis Baptistæ Alberti, De Porcaria Conjuratione, *idem.*

Ever since the Genoese had thrown off the yoke of Filippo Maria of Milan in 1435, their state had been for twenty years one restless and furious volcano of incessant political convulsions. During this period, as indeed throughout the whole of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the revolutions of Genoa were so numerous and rapid, the alternate triumph and overthrow of parties so transient and hurried, and the consequences of these oscillations of faction so utterly evanescent, that I shall avoid the unprofitable attempt to burthen the mind of the reader with a crowd of vicissitudes, which it would be useless, if it were not also impossible, for the memory to retain. Such details must in themselves occupy whole chapters, while they would scarcely deserve our attention; and I shall therefore pass them over with a few general notices of their prominent characteristics.

There is perhaps little difficulty in ascribing to the influence of an ill balanced aristocracy, the origin of those disorders which, for nearly two centuries, may be said to have fatally distinguished Genoa as the unhappiest republic within the experience of all history. The rivalry of the four leading houses of the old nobility had originally inoculated the people with the virulent spirit of factious hatred. The subsequent exclusion of the ancient aristocracy from the privileges of government, had only made way for the rise of opulent and powerful families of great commoners; and the fierce struggles of these new leaders, with

the old nobles and with each other, still farther habituated the mass of the citizens to eternal commotion and bloodshed, and made the thirst of licence and change their dominant passion. There is no record in the annals of the world of a series of civil wars and revolutions, at once so sanguinary, lengthened, and ceaseless, as those which were fought in the commercial streets and narrow territory of Genoa. If the citizens, in moments of exhaustion and weariness, sighed for repose from the fearful uproar of faction, they knew no better resource than to seek for tranquillity under the yoke of a foreign master. If the shame of slavery or their impatience of firm and regular government roused them to re-assert their independence, it became still the independence of anarchy. The people had no sooner established a faction in power, than they at once abandoned its support to bestow their affections on its opponents; and these again were only raised, to be in turn the sport of the popular inconstancy. No principle, no lasting political attachments, no regard for the safety of the state, actuated either the turbulent people or their rulers. The insatiable love of revolution was their only intelligible motive: a bold intolerance of servitude their only approach to virtue. Thus, though they frequently surrendered themselves to the sovereignty of France or of Milan, they never tamely endured the arbitrary authority of a prince; and they vigorously cast off their chains, as often as they had imprudently invited their galling imposition.

At the epoch before us, Genoa was oppressed both by her usual dissensions at home, and by foreign assaults and reverses. The great plebeian families of the Fregosi and Adorni were desperately contending for the supremacy; and we find them alternately in banishment and occupying the ducal chair and the national councils. So superior was the influence which they divided to the power of the old nobility and of the rest of their own order, that the four ancient families of the Spinola, the Doria, the Fieschi, and the Grimaldi, as well as the Guarci and other distinguished commoners, were either content to range themselves under the respective banners of these arrogant rivals, or reduced to exercise a secondary influence in the state. The Adorni and their adherents formed altogether perhaps the weaker party. They were at this juncture in banishment, and as interminable civil wars had taught an unsuccessful faction to see no guilt or shame in alliance with the enemies of their country, the exiles raised their arms against Genoa in concert with Alfonso of Naples. In addition to the distress, which the rancorous hostility of that monarch entailed on the republic, she was a severe sufferer by the fall of the eastern empire to the Turks. Her flourishing and invaluable colony of Pera had, almost without succour from the parent state and without resistance, followed the fate of Constantinople. After this heavy loss, the isle of Chio and Caffa, with her other possessions in the Levant and Black Sea, were in imminent danger;

and still the strength of the republic was consumed in intestine discord. The rulers of Genoa were conscious of the peril, in which these transmarine possessions were placed, by foreign attacks and their own neglect. Yet either dreading that amidst the troubles of the state, they should want the means of protecting its foreign dependencies, or as if desirous of being released from all other care than the pursuit of factious quarrels, they consigned the sovereignty of all their colonies to the bank of St. George. That celebrated company of state creditors, which had been incorporated in 1407, and the councils of which, by a singular and happy fortune, were never agitated by the national madness of party, was certainly better qualified for the trust than the ephemeral chiefs of the republic itself.

War of Alfonso of Naples against the republic.

Alfonso of Naples, besides the hereditary hatred which always reigned between the Genoese and his Catalan subjects, bore an irreconcileable enmity to that people. He had never forgiven them their support of the Angevin party in the civil wars of Naples, nor the affront of his naval defeat at Ponza and subsequent captivity. Though, therefore, he had been for a short time at peace with their republic, it was only while the Adorni were in power and flattered his pride by the annual payment of an honorary tribute. His connection with that family and party had been formed during their exile and rebellion against their country; and when they were again expelled from Genoa, Alfonso gratified his animosity

against their fellow citizens, under the shew of protection to them. In signing the quadruple league of 1455, he had extorted a concession from the other contracting parties, that Genoa under the Fregosi should be excluded from the general guarantee of pacification; and in the same year he attacked the coasts of the divided and exhausted state, while the exiled party acted in concert with his fleets. This desultory and harassing warfare by land and sea continued during three years. The Genoese vainly sought aid in Italy against the attacks of Alfonso; for the powers of the league were restricted from assisting them, by the condition which they had weakly permitted the king of Naples to annex to their treaty with him. The doge, Piero Fregoso, at length applied to Charles VII., king of France, for protection; and to that monarch, upon the same terms which had been made with his father in 1396, was the signiory of Genoa formally consigned. 1458

The doge was sensible that the sufferings of continued warfare had rendered his authority odious to his countrymen; but in therefore voluntarily resigning his station, he resolved not to yield a victory to the king of Naples; and the French sovereign was required to choose for his lieutenant at Genoa the hereditary enemy of Alfonso. This was John, titular duke of Calabria, son of his ancient rival, Regnier of Anjou. The Angevin prince arrived to assume his new command, with ten gallies and a body of French troops.

CHAP. VII. PART I.

But his appearance in Italy only induced Alfonso to push his operations against the Genoese, in a more systematic and determined manner than he had hitherto done. He fitted out a numerous fleet, which formed the blockade of their capital; he disembarked the flower of the Neapolitan troops in their territory; and their numerous exiles at the same time descended from the Ligurian mountains, and laid siege to the city. But while John of Anjou with his followers and the citizens were courageously awaiting an assault, the operations of the war before Genoa were suddenly suspended by intelligence of the death of Alfonso. The besieging armament at once dispersed. The Catalan and Neapolitan forces returned to the ports of their respective kingdoms, and the exiles to their mountains; and Genoa was left, less to the repose of victory, than to the miseries of exhaustion and pestilence.

His death,

and character.

Alfonso, king of Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, the Balearic Isles, and Sardinia, and of Naples and Sicily, owed less of the splendour which surrounded his throne to these extensive possessions, than to the force of his personal character. He was an able captain, and an active and skilful statesman; and, in an age when the sovereigns of Italy rivalled each other in the protection of literature, far surpassed them all in his real love of learning, his passionate enthusiasm for antiquity, and his magnificent patronage of genius. These mental virtues were graced in him by all the dazzling accomplishments of chivalry: by a

captivating affability and seductive eloquence, by a romantic tenderness for the softer sex, and by the frank dignity and heroic courage of knighthood. His court of Naples, which he chose for his residence above any of his patrimonial states, was the school of letters, and the scene of architectural grandeur and sumptuous pageantry. A high-minded and generous prince, Alfonso in many respects well merited the sirname of the Magnanimous, with which his lettered contemporaries delighted to honor him, and to repay his unbounded liberality; but this and all his fair qualities were too nearly allied to defects. His Neapolitan subjects, charmed with his confidence in their love and with the flattering preference which induced him to reside among them, overlooked the lavish profusion that obliged him to load them with taxes; but his restless ambition, and more than one act of bad faith into which it betrayed him, did not deserve the same easy judgment. Still his few vices should in candour be ascribed rather to the influence of the times of violence and treachery in which he lived, than to his own noble nature. His virtues would claim admiration in any age, and, in the fifteenth century, he was the greatest and most amiable monarch of Europe.

The affection which the Neapolitans bore to this distinguished sovereign was not transferred to his only son Ferdinand, for whom, notwithstanding the illegitimacy of his birth, Alfonso had earnestly laboured to procure their allegi-

ance. As he had no lawful issue, the rules of inheritance and equity consigned all his patrimonial crowns to his brother, the king of Navarre; but the right of the regular Aragonese dynasty to the kingdom of Naples,—his personal acquisition,—appeared more questionable, and it was the darling object of his life to secure its throne for his son. Besides the indirect guarantee of the quadruple league, he had been careful to obtain from successive popes, as feudal superiors of the Neapolitan crown, a formal settlement in favor of Ferdinand. The decision of the parliament of the kingdom,*—a better title—had ratified his intentions; and when he died, the right of his son

* Notwithstanding the elaborate researches of Giannone in his civil history of Naples, there can be very little inducement or reward for us to follow his enquiries into the constitutional system of that kingdom. But the mention of the Neapolitan parliament in the text, may naturally suggest a few words in this place on its composition and character. The monarchy of Naples, as founded by the Normans, was altogether feudal; and in the parliament all the barons of the realm, as tenants in chief of the king, sat in the upper house, together with such ecclesiastics as were feudatories of the crown. The second or lower house was composed of the deputies of the capital and other towns. The parliament of Naples was the great national diet of the kingdom, but it never seems to have insisted upon that exclusive right of taxation, without which no other privilege could be secure. No sufficient guarantee therefore existed for its regular convocation; and the neglect of successive monarchs to assemble it threw its authority into disuse or contempt.—Yet it is remarkable enough that, when Alfonso wished to abolish the old financial duties and to substitute others in their place, he did not carry his plans into execution, until he had assembled a parliament, and obtained its previous consent to such innovations. — (See Giannone, the sixth chapter of b. xxvi.)

to succeed him appeared established by the consent of his feudal chief and his people, and guaranteed by all the states of the Italian peninsula.

Unpopularity of his son Ferdinand.

But the dark and perfidious temper of Ferdinand was little calculated to interest either his father's subjects or allies in his behalf. Alfonso had scarcely breathed his last, when the principal Neapolitan barons, who had acquired a perfect acquaintance with the character of Ferdinand, began secretly to plot against his pretensions. They offered their allegiance first to the new king of Aragon, and, on receiving discouragement from him, to the house of Anjou. Regnier, the ancient rival of Alfonso, was still in existence, but his son John was nearer at hand in the exercise of the government of Genoa, and it was to him that the malcontents addressed themselves. John of Anjou eagerly accepted their offer; the Genoese engaged to assist him with their forces; and he endeavoured by negociation to obtain the support of the other Italian powers in his enterprise. Both Regnier and his son were more or less known throughout Italy, and the uprightness and simplicity of character, which advantageously contrasted them both with Ferdinand, made a general impression in their favor. Notwithstanding the obligations of the quadruple league, Florence assisted the duke John with presents, and Venice evinced an inclination to befriend him. Sforza alone, who never lost sight of the pretensions of the duke of Orleans to the Milanese throne, remained true to his sound policy of preventing

The barons of Naples offer their crown to the house of Anjou.

CHAP. VII. PART I.

the establishment of any French dynasty in Italy. He declared his resolution firmly to maintain his existing alliance, and prepared for the vigorous support of Ferdinand. His negociations were even more serviceable to that prince than his arms. By his earnest representations to his friend Cosmo de' Medici and to the Venetians, of the danger which threatened all Italy if the French, already in possession of Genoa and Asti, should be suffered to place a prince of their nation on the throne of Naples, he obtained from both the republics of Florence and Venice a sincere and common declaration of neutrality in the contest between the parties of Anjou and Aragon.

With still greater success, Sforza had already converted the threatened hostility of the papacy against Ferdinand, into an earnest resolution to defend him. Immediately on Alfonso's death Calixtus III., in contempt of the repeated sanction given by his predecessors to Ferdinand's succession, pronounced the fief of Naples to have lapsed to the Holy See; but the years of the feeble old pontiff ill suited the schemes of selfish ambition which dictated this breach of decency and faith. He followed Alfonso to the grave in little more than a month, and was succeeded by the celebrated Æneas Silvius Piccolomini, one of the most learned men and enlightened statesmen of his times. With the new pontiff, who assumed the title of Pius II., Sforza made the support of Ferdinand the condition of his alliance; and he so impressed him with the conviction that the ag-

grandizement of the French in Italy must reduce the Holy See to an absolute dependance on them, that Pius, whose foresight was as clear as that of the Milanese prince, saw all his danger, and immediately devoted himself to the Aragonese cause as his own.

Obstinate civil war in their kingdom between the parties of Anjou and Aragon. 1459—1464

Meanwhile John of Anjou, nothing discouraged by the opposition of Sforza, was not the less resolved to accept the overtures of the Neapolitan barons. In concert with Ferdinand, the duke of Milan endeavoured to find sufficient occupation for the Angevin prince at Genoa. Piero Fregoso, the late doge, upon some disgust at the conduct of the French, had retired into Lombardy, where Sforza now assisted him in levying troops to act against John. With the co-operation of the gallies of Ferdinand, Fregoso invaded Liguria, and attacked Genoa by land and sea. But no success attended his operations; the Genoese remained attached to their governor; and, in a second expedition, Fregoso himself was killed in an ineffectual assault. John of Anjou, thus relieved of all apprehensions for the safety of the city, set sail with a Genoese and Provençal armament for the coast of Naples; where he had no sooner displayed his standard than Orsini, prince of Tarento, the most powerful noble of the realm, the dukes of Suessa and Sora, and other great feudatories openly declared for him. Their rebellion broke forth in all quarters against Ferdinand; his adherents and troops were every where routed; and many of the principal places in the kingdom

1459

CHAP. VII. PART I. 1460

Share of other Italian powers in the contest.

opened their gates to the French prince. Forces from all parts of Italy now poured into the Neapolitan states. The duke of Milan sent his two brothers with an army to the succour of Ferdinand, and the troops of Pius II. passed the frontiers in the same cause: while, on the other hand, Jacopo Piccinino, the surviving son of Niccolo, led his bands from a predatory warfare in Romagna to enter the Angevin service; and numbers of the veteran adventurers of Italy gladly enrolled themselves under this distinguished captain,—the last who remained of the great condottieri of former years.

While the Milanese army was opposed to this celebrated commander in the Abruzzos, Ferdinand forming his junction with the papal forces, advanced against the duke John of Anjou, who was about to lay siege to Nola. That prince retired at his approach to some strong country about Sarno, where, near the castle of that name, Ferdinand surprised his camp during the night. But the victorious soldiery dispersed to plunder, and the Angevin captains, rallying their troops and falling in turn upon their assailants during the disorder of a pillage, put them to a total rout. Nearly the whole army of Ferdinand was captured; and he escaped himself with difficulty from the field. Three weeks later, a battle was fought at San Fabbiato in the Abruzzos, between Piccinino and the Milanese army. At the close of a combat of unusual slaughter and desperation for these Italian wars, Piccinino first drew off his troops;

but the heavier loss of the Milanese had all the effects of a complete defeat.

By these brilliant successes, the kingdom was left almost wholly in the hands of the Angevin party, and it may seem strange how John of Anjou failed of an ultimate triumph. But the usual fate of his house in their Neapolitan contests still overtook him. The prince of Tarento, whose niece was married to Ferdinand, suffered himself to be moved by her supplications, notwithstanding his aversion for the character of her husband. He relaxed in his exertions in the Angevin cause, and finally deserted it; and he is accused of having neutralized the effects of the late successes by his perfidious counsels, which the duke John blindly followed. Thus he induced him to consume in the siege of some petty towns the remainder of the summer, which should have been employed in the reduction of the capital itself. But the zeal and activity with which Sforza remounted his worsted troops, and fed the Neapolitan war with men and money and artillery, had yet greater influence upon its decision. Encouraged by his powerful succours, the Aragonese party recovered from their panic, and early in the following year a new revolution at Genoa more than counterbalanced all their reverses in the kingdom.

1461

After the departure of the duke of Anjou from that city, several causes had contributed gradually, as usual, to disgust the people with their foreign rulers. The old nobles and the plebeians had

violent and constant altercations in the councils of the state on the distribution of the public burthens, from which the aristocracy claimed an exemption, though their pressure was aggravated by the exhaustion left by civil discords and pestilence, and by the Neapolitan war. The French governor sided with the nobles in these disputes, and thus imprudently attracted the discontent of the people towards his own authority. A furious insurrection arose; and the great plebeian parties of the Adorni and Fregosi, agreeing for once in common hatred against the foreigners, and succoured by the duke of Milan, together expelled the French from the city. It was to no purpose that old Regnier of Anjou arrived with a fleet and army from Provence, and disembarked his troops to attempt the recovery of the place. The Genoese with the aid of Sforza repulsed their assaults, and routed them with such severe slaughter, that nearly three thousand French were killed, or drowned in attempting to escape to their vessels.

This revolution of Genoa was a cruel blow to the Angevin party. It deprived them of the alliance, the fleets, and the subsidies of that republic, and of a ready point of intermediate support from France. The resources of Regnier himself were completely exhausted, his son could no longer maintain the advantages which he had gained, and in the next campaign the fortunes of Ferdinand acquired a decided preponderance. Forming a junction with the Milanese army, he inflicted a signal defeat upon the Angevins near

1462

the castle of Orsaria, and from this period entered on a series of brilliant successes, which were unchecked by a single reverse of any consequence. The prince of Tarento, perceiving that the affairs of the house of Anjou were becoming desperate, and that their resources were utterly expended, was the first to abandon the duke John, and hastened the reconciliation with Ferdinand, which he had for some time been secretly negociating. His defection was soon followed by that of Jacopo Piccinino, who went over to the standard of the Aragonese prince with all his army. The cities and the barons of the Angevin party, one by one imitated the same example; and John of Anjou, whom they had so eagerly invited into their kingdom, finding himself abandoned by fortune, betrayed by his friends, and destitute of the means of continuing the contest, at last yielded the game to his triumphant adversary. After a personal deliberation between him and his father Regnier, who himself brought his son a reinforcement of a few gallies to the Neapolitan coast, the two princes of Anjou resolved to shed no more blood in a ruined cause; and at once setting sail for France, left the long contested throne of Naples to the quiet possession of Ferdinand.

1463

Final triumph of Ferdinand.

1464

Peace had already been restored in Romagna by the submission to the pope of the family of the Malatesti, who had been in arms against him in the Angevin alliance; and only one event was wanting to terminate in all Italy the troubles

CHAP. VII. PART I.

which the disputed succession of Alfonso of Naples had created. Genoa was again torn by the furious dissensions and civil wars of the Fregosi and Adorni, who had begun to combat in the streets, even at the moment when they were engaged in common in expelling the French. The Fregosi prevailed, but it was only themselves to separate into opposite parties, and to deliver over the republic to sedition, rapine, and anarchy; until the weary state, with the usual alternation of its fortunes, was prepared to sink from these turbulent horrors into the repose of slavery. Meanwhile Francesco Sforza was weaving his intrigues to secure so valuable a dominion for himself. By seducing all the exiles and malcontents to his interest, the old nobles, the party of the Adorni, and even some of the Fregosi; and by advancing the Milanese troops towards Genoa; he succeeded in overturning the ruling faction. The sovereignty of the state was immediately deferred to him, upon the same conditions which had too often been accepted and broken by foreign masters; and in submission to the duke of Milan, Genoa shared the general pacification of the peninsula. *

General repose of Italy.

Affairs of Venice.

For several years after the war of the Neapolitan succession, the peace of Italy was little interrupted by internal hostilities. The appalling

* Johannis Simonetæ, Rer. Gest. Fr. Sfortiæ, pp. 683—758. Giannone, Ist. Civ. del Regno di Napoli, b. xxvi. p. 489. ad fin. and xxvii. ad p. 560. Muratori, Annali, A.D. 1455—1464. Sismondi, cc. 76—78.

progress of the Turkish dominion filled all the states of the peninsula with well-founded apprehensions for their common safety, and in some measure checked their disposition for mutual violence and injury. In the arduous struggle to repel the advance of the infidel arms, which threatened the total subjugation of Europe, Venice was, by her position, her commercial relations, and her numerous dependancies in the Grecian seas, of all the Christian powers first exposed to the storms of Ottoman war, and most deeply interested in the issue of the contest. She therefore naturally had by far the greatest share in hostilities which excited the anxious attention, and might influence the fate of the whole peninsula; and if we except a few domestic revolutions, almost all that is important in Italian history for a considerable period after the settlement of Ferdinand on the throne of Naples, is to be found in the Venetian annals.

Story of the Foscari.

Before we offer a general notice of the foreign affairs of the republic during these years, we may pause to relate one of those dark episodes which mark the fearful despotism and phlegmatic cruelty of her government, and throw so peculiar and sombre a colouring over her domestic history. At the epoch when the peace of Lodi terminated the long continental warfare of Venice, the ducal chair was still filled by that Francesco Foscari, against whose passion for war his grave predecessor had cautioned the senate. The prediction of Mocenigo had been fulfilled: for above thirty

years the ambition of Foscari to signalize his reign by conquests in Italy, had plunged the republic in incessant hostility; and the splendour of the dominion which she established in Lombardy was balanced by the ills of war and pestilence, the exhaustion of her treasures, and the neglect of her transmarine interests. But the continental aggrandizement of the state veiled the real decay, by which it was dearly purchased; and Foscari, whose personal activity and talents had guided the warlike counsels of the republic, acquired a dazzling reputation and enjoyed a greater credit than almost any of his predecessors. The influence and glory of the doge were alone sufficient to excite the watchful jealousy of the council of ten; a knowledge of his ambitious character had increased their distrust and suspicion; and they had only awaited the opportunity to punish the chief magistrate of their state for his popularity and fame. If the desire of elevating his family had once inflamed Foscari, his pride had already been quenched in domestic sorrows and chilled by age. He had lost three sons, the successive hopes of his house: only a fourth, Jacopo, survived; and it was by the infliction of frightful miseries on him that the council of ten, with cold and stern malignity, seized the occasion of embittering the last years of his father.

Upon a secret accusation of having, contrary to law, received presents of jewels from Filippo Maria of Milan, Jacopo Foscari was in 1445 dragged before the council of ten. In the presence of that

tribunal, at which his unhappy parent was compelled to preside, (such was the refinement of Venetian cruelty,) he was tortured into an avowal of the charge, and then condemned by a sentence, which the doge was obliged to pronounce from his own lips, to an eternal banishment from the city. For five years after this, Jacopo Foscari lived tranquilly in his exile at Treviso until, in 1450, one of the council of ten was assassinated. From his causes of hatred to that body for their oppression of his father and himself, and from the accidental presence of his servant at Venice, Jacopo was suspected of the murder. He was brought to the capital, and again put to the question before the council. But the most frightful torments could wring no confession from him; the doge was still the agonized spectator of his sufferings; and still they were prolonged by his inhuman tyrants to an extent which unsettled the reason of the victim. He was now sent to a distant banishment in the colonies; and the real author of the assassination, with which he had been charged, was discovered by a dying confession.

The innocence, the fearful wretchedness of Jacopo Foscari made no impression on his enemies; his longing fits for home became a madness; and finding that all hope of restoration to his family was past, he contrived, in the wildness of his despair, a means of at least embracing them before he died. He wrote from his exile to Sforza, imploring his interference with the senate; and

CHAP. VII. PART I.

knowing that this application to a foreign prince would in itself be construed into a crime, he purposely suffered the letter to fall into the hands of the spies who surrounded him. It was forwarded to the council of ten, and Jacopo, as he had expected, was immediately summoned a prisoner to Venice. For the third time was he tortured before the eyes of his father; the touching declaration that he had written the letter merely to gain a last sight of his aged parents and his wife moved not the compassion of his enemies; and his frame was mangled and dislocated anew.* In this state,

* In contemplating these scenes, who can imagine that, at the very moment of their occurrence, Venice was the chosen place of Italian and indeed of European festivity; and who, in viewing the gay figures that revelled in her masque, can believe that so fair a spot could ever be reddened by blood. But her prisons and her palaces were contiguous, and if she arose from the sea, like a fairy creation, the wand was waved by malignant as well as beneficent destiny. Lord Byron, with much pomp and prodigality of phrase, has described the beauties and glories of her lot, and has made himself one of the key-stones of the arch with

"Shylock, and the Moor,
And Pierre."

But he has left untouched all her silent crimes. The double nature of Venice, the strange mixture in all their extremes of misery and joy, have been described with force, spirit, and fearful truth, by a poet whose muse has generally breathed over the gentler feelings of our nature.

"Yet what so gay as Venice? Every gale
Breathed heavenly music! and who flocked not thither
To celebrate her nuptials with the sea;
To wear the mask, and mingle in the crowd
With Greek, Armenian, Persian—night and day
(There, and there only, did the hours stand still)
Pursuing through her thousand labyrinths

his distracted family were permitted to visit him in prison, and his heart thus received its last, its sad satisfaction. The sentence of banishment was confirmed with increased severity, but his eternal release from earthly oppressors was at hand; and his agonized limbs had scarcely dragged over the shore of his exile, when exhausted nature sighed forth her pain;—and he died.

The unhappy doge had twice solicited permission to abdicate a dignity, which had proved so fatal to his family and to himself, and by the resignation of which he hoped to satiate the hatred of

The enchantress Pleasure; realizing dreams
The earliest, happiest—for a tale to catch
Credulous ears and hold young hearts in chains,
Had only to begin, 'There lived in Venice—.'
What though a strange, mysterious power was there,
Moving throughout, subtle, invisible,
And universal as the air they breathed;
A Power that never slumbered, never pardoned,
All eye, all ear, nowhere and everywhere,
Entering the closet and the sanctuary,
No place of refuge for the Doge himself,
Most present when least thought of—nothing dropt
In secret, when the heart was on the lips,
Nothing in feverish sleep, but instantly
Observed and judged—a Power, that if but glanced at
In casual converse, be it where it might,
The speaker lowered at once his eyes, his voice,
And pointed upward as to God in Heaven—
What tho' that Power was there, he who lived thus
Pursuing Pleasure, lived as if it were not.
But let him in the midnight-air indulge
A word, a thought against the laws of Venice,
And in that hour he vanished from the earth!"

Rogers' Italy, p. 87.

CHAP. VII. PART I.

his enemies, and to stop the persecution of his son. But the council of ten had as often forcibly retained him on the throne. He was now eighty-six years of age, and after the death of Jacopo, oppressed with years and grief, was no longer capable of discharging the vain ceremonial of his office. But his enemies could not suffer him to die in peace. Among them the most implacable was Jacopo Loredano, who bore an hereditary enmity to the house of Foscari, and attributed to Francesco—apparently without any proof—the sudden death of his father and uncle.* At the instigation of this bitter foe, who was now chief of the council of ten, it was resolved by that tribunal to finish the humiliation of the doge, whose abdication they had before refused to accept. They now required him to resign his dignity; but an oath which they had themselves extorted from him forbade him to do so; and they then passed a sentence of deposition against him. They would have induced him to leave the palace of government privately; but he insisted on quitting it by the same great stair-case on which, thirty-four years before, he had solemnly been installed in his dignity. Leaning on his staff, the old man descended from the palace, amidst the

1457

* Loredano, who like almost all the noble Venetians of *that* day, was engaged in commerce, had entered on the debtor side of his books: "Francesco Foscari, for the death of my father and uncle." The opposite page was left blank, until the doge had sunken under his miseries; and it was then filled with the words, l'ha pagata,—*he has paid me.*

indignant sympathy of the assembled multitude, and retired to his private house: but his heart was broken. The sound of the great bell of St. Mark, which tolled to announce the election of his successor, struck on his ear as a death-knell. His agitation produced the rupture of a blood-vessel and instantaneous suffocation. The people had dared to regret his fate; and we may learn their feeling and the tyranny of their rulers, from a decree of the council of ten, which forbade them on pain of death to speak of the affair of Francesco Foscari.

Institution of the inquisitors of state.

So much, indeed, had the suspicious temper of the Venetian government increased, that the council of ten now appeared too numerous a body for the purposes of vigilance, secrecy, and severity; and by a decree of the great council in 1454, a permanent committee was selected from among the ten of three inquisitors of state, whose despotic authority was to be paramount over even that of their colleagues. The inquisitors of state rendered no account whatever of their magistracy. Their public power over the state was unbounded, their secret jurisdiction universal. Their sentences were restrained by no forms, and their executions so buried in oblivion, that even the blood which they shed was without a trace. The lives of their own colleagues were left at their disposal; unanimity only was required for their decisions; but two of them might appoint an extraordinary inquisitor, to assist in the trial of the third if requisite. So mysterious was the administration of

CHAP. VII. PART I.

this detestable tribunal, and so deep the awe which it inspired almost to the last days of the republic, that the learned Venetian who, in the middle of the last century, accurately traced the civil history of his country, appears to tremble when he declares, that it is the duty of a good citizen to preserve a sacred respect for so illustrious a magistracy, and to abstain from attempting to penetrate, still more to divulge, that which it was their pleasure to clothe in obscurity. *

Danger of Venice from the growth of the Ottoman power.

After the tragic fate of the Foscari, Venice enjoyed for a considerable time a respite from the long wars which had attended the administration of Francesco. But the Turks were meanwhile constantly advancing their conquests towards the eastern frontiers of Italy; and the petty states which had existed in Macedon, and from thence towards Albania and the Morea, successively fell before their arms. In the terror created by the extinction of the eastern empire, the Venetians, whose foreign possessions might next dread the assaults of Mahomet II., had thought less of resistance than of submission to that mighty conqueror. After the capture of Constantinople, they had hastened to ransom their merchants who had fallen into his hands in that city, and to con-

* Sandi was ignorant of the exact date of the establishment of inquisitors of state; but the industrious researches of M. Daru have torn aside the veil which his learned but cautious predecessor was unable or dared not to raise; and he has clearly fixed the creation of this dreadful tyranny at the year 1454. M. Daru's whole account is exceedingly interesting. (See vol. ii. pp. 538—546.)

clude with him a treaty of peace and amity, by which their commercial subjects were permitted to continue in his capital under the government of one of their own magistrates. But every year had since increased the danger of the republic; and the Turkish power had at length penetrated within a day's journey of her Italian frontiers, and yet nearer to her maritime possessions in the Morea, when, on the refusal of one of her governors in that peninsula to deliver up a slave, who had robbed the treasury of the pacha of Athens, the infidels seized upon her city of Argos. The republic was not without hopes of inducing the Greeks throughout the Morea to rise against the Turkish yoke; and her senate resolved to embark in an arduous warfare, which had perhaps become inevitable, but which in its protracted course was destined to yield only exhaustion and defeat.* The expedition of land and naval forces, which the senate fitted out, was at first successful in over-running the Morea, and fortifying the isthmus of Corinth with an immense rampart; but on the approach of a large Turkish army, the republican general shamefully abandoned the easy defence of this bulwark, and the Venetians were driven into their maritime fortresses.

1463

War between the republic and the Turks.

1464

The war between the Venetians and the Turks re-animated the zeal of the pope, Pius II., who since his promotion to the tiara had seriously designed a crusade against the infidels, and who was now relieved from the anxiety which the Neapolitan succession had occasioned to him.

Crusade projected by pope Pius II. against the infidels.

CHAP. VII. PART I.

The aged pontiff ardently engaged in the effort to rouse the nations of Christendom to deliver their brethren in faith from the Musulman yoke; and with a pious sincerity which we must at least admire, resolved himself to embark in the perils of the sacred expedition. He induced the celebrated Albanian hero, George Castriot or Scanderbeg, who had for twenty years valiantly defended the mountains of Epirus against the assaults of the Turks, to resume the war against them. He invited all Christians who desired to assume the cross to meet him at Ancona; and he proceeded himself to that port, whither immense numbers of adventurers and persons of the lowest classes had repaired at his summons, but without money, or arms, or provisions. But the princes of the Italian peninsula, as well as of the rest of Europe, did not share the enthusiasm of their spiritual chief; their zeal was limited to empty professions; and the Venetians alone at length sent their gallies to convoy the crusaders, who had already separated in discouragement. Pius II. lived only to reach the destined place of embarkation. A violent disorder, aggravated by disappointment and grief, terminated his life. The new pope Paul II., whose persecution of letters has given him a disgraceful celebrity, in no respect shared the spirit of his predecessor. Though he assembled a diet of ambassadors from the Italian powers to deliberate on the prosecution of the sacred war, all parties were now alike insincere in the cause. The vicinity of the Turks,

His death.

Pope Paul II.

from whom Italy was only separated by a narrow branch of the sea, could not unite them in the common defence; and Venice was abandoned to sustain alone all the burthens of the war into which she had entered.

For some years after the death of Pius II., the contest between the republic and the infidels was maintained without any decisive result, either among the islands of the Grecian Archipelago, or on the coasts of the Morea. In that peninsula, the Venetians defended themselves with difficulty; or if they attempted any offensive operation, it was only to subject the unhappy Greeks to the alternate ravages of their armies and of the Turks. And in the Levant, also, the naval superiority of the republic was evinced only in a course of devastation and piracy, which obliged her natural allies to make common cause with the Musulmans. But at length Mahomet II. prepared for the more vigorous prosecution of the war. An immense army was collected at Constantinople, together with the most powerful fleet with which the Musulmans had ever put to sea. This mighty armament, which, in the exaggerations of the Latins, is variously stated from 100,000 to 300,000 men and 400 vessels, was directed, by land and sea, along the Thracian coast towards Greece, by the ancient route of Xerxes; and its object was the conquest of the island of Negropont,—the most important of all the Venetian possessions in the Archipelago. The Venetian

1470

CHAP. VII. PART I.

force in the island was small, and the inferior strength of the squadron, which was dispatched to its relief, was rendered more conspicuous by the incapacity or cowardice of its admiral. Mahomet II. commanded his army in person; he passed the narrow strait, from the mainland of Greece to the island, by a bridge of boats which his fleet established; the Venetian troops were massacred after a desperate resistance and a feeble attempt of the squadron to succour them; and Negropont remained in the hands of the Turks.

Conquest of Negropont by the Turks.

Alarm of Italy.

The fall of Negropont created a general panic throughout Italy. Hitherto the Venetians had appeared masters of the seas, and as long as their naval superiority lasted, the waters of the Mediterranean formed an impassable barrier for the Ottomans. But the sudden creation of an overpowering Turkish marine revealed to Italy that her shores were open to the assaults of the fierce conqueror, who had sworn to destroy the throne of Christendom. Paul II., who had hitherto intrigued only to trouble the internal repose of the peninsula, was now terrified into earnest endeavours to unite its powers against the Turks; and he readily induced all the Italian states to renew the quadruple league of 1455 for their common defence. The pope died soon afterwards and was succeeded by Sixtus IV.; but his views were pursued; and a respectable armament, fitted out in the papal states, joined the Venetian admiral at the same time with a Neapolitan squadron of like

League against the infidels.

1471

force, which was dispatched by Ferdinand. The combined Christian fleet numbered nearly one hundred great gallies; and the Venetian admiral Mocenigo, to whom the supreme command was deferred, had resolved to divert the war from the Grecian islands to the continent of Asia Minor. The Turkish navy did not attempt to leave the Dardanelles to oppose him; and the Asiatic coast was horribly ravaged by the allies in a predatory contest, which fell alike on the Christian and Turkish inhabitants. But except the pillage and destruction of Smyrna, the war produced nothing worthy of notice; the sovereign of Persia, who allied himself with the enemies of his faith, was defeated by Mahomet II.; and after the ill success of this diversion, the naval efforts of the Italians, which had produced no adequate return for an immense expenditure, gradually expired.

1472—1474

Its abortive results.

Entrance of the Turks into Italy.

Meanwhile the war in Albania and in the Morea was prosecuted with various success; but there is nothing to interest us in its obscure details or distant connection with our immediate subject. The appearance of the Turks in Italy itself is more worthy of notice. It was in 1472 that, after having rapidly traversed Carniola, their cavalry penetrated for the first time into Friuli. Their object was only plunder; but this earnest of future invasions excited appalling apprehensions; and, five years afterwards, these were realized by a second and more serious expedition of the pacha of Bosnia into the same province. The

1477

CHAP. VII. PART I.

Venetians had been careful to fortify their whole eastern frontier with intrenchments, but they were surprised by the unexpected advance of the pacha. The Venetian troops were defeated; and the infidels, spreading themselves over the plains between the Isonzo and the Tagliamento, even passed the latter of these rivers, and filled the whole country with flames, which were visible by night from the towers of Venice itself. That capital was struck with consternation; the inhabitants, with those of the districts of Padua, Verona, and Vicenza, were called out to arms; but the infidels again retired, without attempting to establish themselves in the territory of the republic. In the following year, the pacha of Bosnia once more appeared on the banks of the Isonzo; but the Venetians were better prepared to receive him. Their numerous troops remained quietly behind their intrenchments, and the Turks were compelled to retreat, without having effected an entrance into Friuli. But the repetition of these attacks, the difficulty with which the contest was maintained in Albania, and the desertion of the cause by all other Christian powers, taught the Venetian senate that peace could alone save their republic from destruction. They were therefore glad to obtain from Mahomet II. upon his own terms a pacification, for which they had long endeavoured to negociate. The city of Scutari and the part of Albania which, since the death of Scanderbeg, the Venetians had occupied and de-

1478

fended, were ceded to the sultan, together with the important island of Negropont, and an annual tribute in lieu of duties upon Venetian merchandize. But all other conquests were mutually restored, and thus terminated fifteen years of the most arduous warfare in which the republic had ever been engaged.

Close of the war between Venice and the Ottomans. 1479

While Venice was thus contending with difficulty against the Ottoman power for the preservation of her colonies, Genoa, with less vigour and fortune, had lost the whole of her possessions and influence in the Black Sea. With the sceptre of Constantinople, the Turks had acquired the key of the Euxine; the Genoese could no longer communicate by sea with their great colony of Caffa, except at the pleasure of the sultan; and it was easy to foresee that Mahomet II. would not permit them long to retain so valuable a dependency. Upon the occasion of some petty quarrel with the colonists of Caffa, the Tartar governor of the Crimea besieged the place, and invited the co-operation of the sultan. The Turkish fleet appeared before the port and easily effected a breach in the walls; the colonists were reduced to capitulate; and the last vestige of the Genoese power in the Euxine was thus destroyed. The misfortunes of the Genoese were without a counterpoise; but the reverses of Venice in the late war were balanced by the acquisition of the large and beautiful island of Cyprus.

The Genoese lose their possessions in the Black Sea.

1475

Ever since the conquest of Cyprus by our Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and his gift of its crown

Acquisition of Cyprus by the Venetians.

CHAP. VII. PART I.

to Guy of Lusignan, the descendants of that chieftain had preserved his inheritance with the kingly title. But a disputed succession and a civil war in 1459 entailed ruin on the dynasty of Lusignan. After a contest between the legitimate daughter, and James, the natural son of the late king, in which the latter prevailed, the Venetians bestowed on him their protection and the hand of Catherine Cornaro, a young lady of noble family, who was solemnly declared the adopted daughter of the republic. The new king of Cyprus, who had thus contracted the singular relation of son-in-law to the Venetian state, fulfilled its duties with fidelity and deference. But he died after only a short reign; and the republic immediately acted as the natural guardian of his widow and posthumous child. The Cypriots, however, were not disposed to accept of the insidious protection of a foreign state; and, during the absence of the Venetian fleet, they rebelled against the queen, and deprived her of the charge of her infant son. On his return Mocenigo, the Venetian admiral, saw the importance of the crisis. He collected a strong body of land forces from the republican colonies; he awed the islanders into submission, and occupied their fortresses with his troops; and from this epoch Cyprus may be numbered among the possessions of Venice. The infant son of James of Lusignan and Catherine Cornaro died; the republic faithlessly removed to Venice some natural children on whom, in default of legitimate issue, James had settled the succes-

1473

sion; and, in 1489, the Venetian government at length wholly threw off the mask and completed their perfidious usurpation, by obliging the adopted daughter of their state to abdicate her kingdom. Catherine Cornaro had enjoyed no more than the shadow of royalty under the authority of the delegated counsellors of the Venetian senate: but that body were still fearful of her attempting to render herself independent by a second marriage; and after obtaining her solemn act of resignation in favor of the republic, they withdrew her from the island, and assigned her for life a castle and a revenue in their Lombard states. *

* Marin Sanuto, Vite de' Duchi di Venez. pp. 1154—1206. Sandi, Storia Civ. di Venez. p. ii. b. viii. cc. 9—12. Daru, Hist. de Venise, vol. ii. p. 505, ad fin.

PART II.

Domestic Affairs of Florence—Government of Cosmo de' Medici —His Death and Character—Piero de' Medici—Struggles against his Authority—Final Establishment of the sovereign Influence of the Medici—Death of Piero—Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici—Conspiracy of the Pazzi—Pope Sixtus IV. —His Share in the Plot—Murder of Giuliano de' Medici—Overthrow of the Conspirators—Lorenzo de' Medici, sole Ruler of Florence—State of the Milanese Duchy—Death of Francesco Sforza—Reign of his Son, Galeazzo Maria—His Crimes, and violent Death—Minority of his Son, Gian Galeazzo—Continued Persecution of Lorenzo de' Medici by Sixtus IV.—Unjust War against Florence undertaken by that Pope and the King of Naples—Their Intrigues to deprive the Florentines of the Milanese Alliance—Ludovico Sforza usurps the Government of Milan in the Name of the young Duke—Progress of the War against Florence—Disasters of that State—Discontent of the People—Mission to the King of Naples, generously hazarded by Lorenzo de' Medici—He persuades Ferdinand to conclude Peace with Florence—The Condition of that State still critical —Landing of a Turkish Army near Otranto—Universal Terror of Italy—Peace granted by the Pope to Florence—Abrupt Termination of the Turkish Enterprise—Renewed Ambition of Sixtus IV.—His League with Venice to despoil the House of Este—New War thus excited in Italy—Its Progress—Peace of Bagnolo—Death of Sixtus IV.—Pope Innocent VIII.—His Quarrel with the King of Naples—Discontent of the Neapolitan Nobles against Ferdinand—Their Revolt, supported by the Pope—Alliance of Florence and Milan with Ferdinand—General War in Italy—Bloodless Encounter at Lamentana—Innocent terrified into Peace—Subsequent Cruelties of Ferdinand against his Barons—War of Sarzana between Genoa and Flo-

rence—Genoa relapses under the Yoke of Milan—General Repose of Italy—Last Years of Lorenzo de' Medici—His final Destruction of Florentine Liberty—The Honor of the State sacrificed to save him from Bankruptcy—His Death—Estimate of the Character of Lorenzo de' Medici—Prognostics of a new Æra in the political Condition of Europe—Selfish and vicious Characters of the Rulers of Italy—Pope Alexander VI.—Attempt of Ludovico Sforza to form a League for the Protection of Italy against Foreigners, frustrated by the Vanity of Piero de' Medici—Alarm of Sforza at the Disposition of the King of Naples to protect his Nephew Gian Galeazzo—He invites Charles VIII. of France into Italy—Claims of Charles to the Crown of Naples—His Treaty with Ludovico Sforza—Preparations of Ferdinand of Naples for Defence—His Death—Alfonso II. of Naples, pursues his Father's Measures—Commencement of Hostilities—Entrance of Charles VIII. into Italy.

CHAP. VII. PART II.

Domestic affairs of Florence. 1434—1478

HAVING arrived at the close of the arduous struggle of Venice against the Turkish power, our attention is recalled to the internal affairs of Italy. Among these the domestic condition of Florence still forms the most interesting object; and we must take up the history of that republic from the revolution of 1434, which summoned Cosmo de' Medici from exile to exercise a supreme control over the government of the state. With that triumph of the house of Medici, commenced the last act in the great drama of Florentine liberty, of which the descendants of Cosmo were to complete the destruction. Hitherto Florence had endured all the storms of political violence: she had been exposed to the dangerous enterprises of foreign tyrants, and constantly agitated by the fierce contests of her own implacable factions;

but she had never rested in subjection to the will of a single master. If the administration of the Guelf oligarchy had been partial and arbitrary, it was still in principle republican. The Albizzi and their friends had in general respected the forms of the constitution, and under their sway hope still remained for the ultimate preservation of the commonwealth.

But with the elevation of the Medici, the general spirit of party was over-ruled by blind devotion to the hereditary chiefs of a single great family. The Medici had numerous dependents and clients; but the event proved that they had no political equals in their party: no corrivals in their own counsels of sufficient weight and authority to divide their power and check their influence. They were lords among retainers, and both their own ambition, and the subserviency of their adherents, could have no other tendency than to establish a monarchical government. The prudence and insidious moderation which singularly distinguished that family, their vast wealth, and even their generous virtues, rendered them the most dangerous enemies which a republic could cherish in her bosom; and the fall of Florence under their sway is a memorable example, how much more to be dreaded by a free state is the union of popular affection in a single house, than all the oscillations and divisions of party.

Government of Cosmo de' Medici.

The establishment of Cosmo de' Medici in power was followed by numerous acts of tyranny. The balia formed of his adherents passed sen-

tences of exile upon all the leaders of the fallen oligarchy, and upon a great number of the principal persons of Florence, whose attachment to that body rendered them objects of dread or even of suspicion. Several citizens were also put to death; and for about twenty years, by six successive renewals of the balia, the functions of the constitution were kept in continued suspension. At length, in 1455, the regular mode of drawing magistrates was suffered to revive under the scrutiny of the partizans of the Medici. It would seem that even this tardy and imperfect restoration of the public rights was produced only by the jealousy, which some of the friends of Cosmo began to entertain of his exclusive authority. He himself was not averse from an occasion of shewing them how absolutely their influence depended upon his will. The popular magistracy was no sooner restored amidst transports of public joy, than the men who had usurped all the offices of state under the sanction of Cosmo, found themselves objects of attack to the new administration and of contempt to their fellow-citizens. They were shortly glad to apply themselves to Cosmo to obtain a new balia. To punish them he at first rejected their supplications, and even traversed an unsuccessful effort which they made to carry the measure without him. Having thus increased their humiliation, and exposed to them their own weakness, Cosmo then thought it time to prevent freedom from rearing its head. He no longer opposed the wishes of his friends to create

CHAP. VII. PART II.

a balia; but he was careful to throw on them the reproach of the usurpation which was necessary to the maintenance of his own sovereign influence. He left to Luca Pitti, a man of wealth and presumptuous character, the care of convening a parliament, without himself appearing to participate in the design. The assembly was as usual overawed by an armed force which occupied the avenues to the public place; the nomination of a balia, entirely in the Medicean interest, was assented to by the surprised and trembling people; and torture, exile, and death fell upon some of the citizens who had betrayed most attachment to popular liberty.

1458

Cosmo was now at an advanced age, the infirmities of which were aggravated by severe paroxysms of gout; and he gradually withdrew from public affairs, to pass most of his time at his country seat in the lettered society which he loved. Luca Pitti profited by the retreat of his chief to raise himself. It was he, and no longer Cosmo, who seemed the leader of the dominant party. He openly made a sale of his favor and protection from justice to replenish his exhausted coffers, and to enable him to finish the superb palace which he notwithstanding was still obliged to leave incomplete; and which, becoming in after times the residence of the grand dukes of Florence, only preserved his name to commemorate his impotent vanity. Cosmo was disgusted at the conduct of his followers in supporting the tyranny of this man; but he was daily more dis-

inclined from interference in politics by his great age; and he was finally broken in spirit by the death of his second son, on whose character he had fondly rested his hopes for the future grandeur of his house. He survived this heavy affliction only a year, and died regretted alike by numerous friends, whom he had loaded with benefits, and by his enemies, who had learnt to anticipate with dread the tyranny of his party when no longer restrained by his moderation.

His death, 1464

and character.

If we reject the fulsome adulation, which the numerous men of letters, who were cherished by the bounty of the Medici, lavished on all their house, and which has been absurdly echoed in later times, we must still agree with a severer judge than these flatterers and their copyists, that Cosmo de' Medici was the greatest citizen who ever raised himself to authority in a republic. With a more durable power and a happier fortune than Pericles, he governed the Athens of the middle ages with uninterrupted success for thirty years, and enriched her with all the wonders of art.* This too was done, not at the public

* Cosmo built in Florence the convents and churches of St. Mark and St. Bartolomeo, and the church of St. Lorenzo, the work of the great Brunelleschi. He also raised several sacred edifices in the mountain of Fiesole and in the Mugello, and adorned many of the churches of Florence with sculpture and paintings. But the greatest ornament which he bestowed on the capital was the magnificent palace constructed for him by Michellozzi, and which now bears the name of Riccardi.

The fortune with which Cosmo perfected these works of grandeur, is known by an authentic inventory, printed by Mr. Roscoe in his appendix to

CHAP. VII. PART II.

charge, but at his own cost; and still the simplicity of his habits, and the careful pursuit of his commercial profession, enabled him to reserve a portion of his immense wealth for the splendid patronage of learning and learned men. He was a warm friend and a generous patron, an able merchant, and one of the most skilful and penetrating statesmen of his times; while his taste in art and judgment in letters shed a pleasing lustre over his more essential qualities. But, as the citizen of a free state, his character had the disgraceful stain, which brands the reputation of all his descendants. He preferred the personal in-

the life of Lorenzo de Medici, to have amounted in 1440 to rather more than 235,000 florins of gold; and twenty-nine years later this capital had very slightly increased. The gold florin being constantly the eighth of an ounce was worth, weight for weight, about ten shillings, and not half a crown as Mr. Roscoe erroneously supposes (vol. i. p. 172.) The capital of Cosmo was therefore short of 120,000*l.*; or, making allowance for the different value of money, equal to half a million sterling at this day. His annual profits, calculated at twenty per cent upon his principal, were therefore equivalent to about 100,000*l.* of our modern currency. The profits of the Medici appeared to have flowed from the spice trade to Alexandria and the East; from a sort of monopoly which they had acquired of the alum mines of Italy; from landed estates; and, above all, from their commercial banks for loans. These were established throughout the principal cities of Europe; the most powerful sovereigns were often among their debtors; and the exorbitant rates of interest of the times produced enormous returns. It was thus that in less than forty years after the recall of Cosmo from exile, the Medici were enabled to spend, in support of their political influence, in buildings, charities, &c. 663,775 florins — worth above 1,300,000*l.* of these times. — (Roscoe, Appendix, vol. iii. p. 45.)

dulgence of a selfish ambition to the true grandeur and happiness of Florence; and the free suffrage of history will hesitate to confirm to his memory that glorious title of father of his country, which was inscribed on his tomb by the republic whose independence he had ruined.

Piero de' Medici.

Cosmo de' Medici left only one son, Piero, whose inferiority in talents and constitutional infirmity of health seemed little calculated to maintain the ascendancy of his house. But it was a convincing proof how firmly Cosmo had planted the foundations of an hereditary influence, that notwithstanding the bodily ailments which appeared to incapacitate Piero from the direction of public affairs, he was enabled successfully to assume his father's authority over the counsels of the state. The ancient partizans of Cosmo, who in his declining years had occupied the government under Luca Pitti, were resolved not to admit the control of Piero. The majority of them were actuated by jealousy and selfish ambition, a few by more praiseworthy motives. One of these men, Neroni Diotisalvo, by giving Piero the treacherous advice to withdraw his property from a commerce which his health precluded him from superintending, led him to ruin many of his Florentine debtors by requiring payment of loans which his father had advanced to them. He thus converted many clients into enemies, before he discovered the snare in time to prevent the decay of his influence.

Struggle against his authority.

Piero displayed more ability in the struggle which was now carried on in the public councils, between his numerous creatures and the faction which had withdrawn from his house. On the expiration of the last balia, some of that party endeavoured to avail themselves of the restoration of the constitutional magistracy to deliver the state from his influence, but their projects were over-ruled by his adherents; and they then formed a conspiracy to effect their purposes by violence. With this view they secretly collected an armed force, and obtained the promise of support from the duke of Modena. Piero, however, penetrating their plans, evinced an unexpected activity. He procured the aid of troops from the duke of Milan, and from Giovanni Bentivoglio who governed at Bologna, to watch the motions of the Modenese force; and attended by his son Lorenzo, he repaired in a litter from his country seat, at which he was usually detained by his infirmities, to Florence, where his partizans had assembled a great number of armed men in his palace. Meanwhile he had succeeded by his intrigues in winning over Luca Pitti to his party. That ambitious citizen, whose talents were very unequal to the station to which he had aspired, was seduced by a hollow overture of a matrimonial alliance with the Medici, to desert his party; and his associates, intimidated by his defection, suffered the moment to escape for an appeal to arms. They were reduced to consent to an accommodation by the in-

terference of the existing signiory. After this, Piero only dissembled until the rotation of magistracy left the direction of the state in the hands of men subservient to his interests; and he then threw off the mask. A parliament of the people was assembled, the public place was filled with soldiery devoted to the Medici, and a new balia was nominated of the creatures of Piero. A considerable number of the citizens of note who had shewn themselves hostile to his authority were banished; and Luca Pitti, who had betrayed them, was only exempted from the same sentence, to drag out the rest of his days amidst the universal contempt of all parties.

1466

Final establishment of the sovereign influence of the Medici.

By this revolution the authority of the Medici over Florence might be considered as finally established, and Piero remained the acknowledged ruler of the state. By successive sentences of banishment since the triumph of Cosmo in 1434, Italy had been filled with Florentine exiles of adverse parties. Their common misfortunes produced a reconciliation among them, and they succeeded in instigating Venice and some of the minor powers to support their cause. Piero on the other hand confirmed the alliance of Florence with Milan and Naples; and a general war seemed thus kindled in the peninsula, which the pope, Paul II., sedulously strove to foment. But after an uninteresting campaign, a pacification was concluded between the contending powers, without any stipulation in behalf of the Florentine outlaws. This short war afforded the govern-

1467

CHAP. VII. PART II.

ment of the Medici a pretext for new acts of proscription and severity. The administration of justice was openly prostituted to purposes of oppression and venality; and Piero, oppressed by his bodily sufferings, and disgusted with the tyrannical conduct of his own followers, closed his life in retirement, amidst factious excesses which his increasing infirmities had denied him the power to repress.

Death of Piero. 1469

Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici.

Piero de' Medici left two sons, of whom the eldest, Lorenzo, was only twenty-one years of age; Giuliano, the second, was five years younger. Notwithstanding their extreme youth, the brothers were invited by their friends to assume the supreme authority of the state. The men who under Piero had engrossed the offices of administration, and whose tyranny had provoked his dying indignation, were not without the ambition of ruling in their own names. But they felt that it was far easier to maintain a power cemented by time than to elevate a new one; and they preferred the abuses of a factious government, by which they hoped to continue to profit under the nominal supremacy of the young Medici, to the love of their country, or even to the desire of personal independence. They therefore hastened to offer their professions of respect to Lorenzo and Giuliano, as the sole rulers of Florence. The brothers received the charge of the state with modesty and prudence. Lorenzo, who acted for his brother, did not at first assume to himself the conduct of affairs, but left the real administration

of the republic in the hands of the same party which had hitherto held it. Divided between the studies and the tastes of youth, the brothers were constantly either surrounded in their palace by all the men who were most distinguished in Florence for literature and art, or occupied in charming the populace with brilliant festivals. Meanwhile the public peace was for several years wholly undisturbed, except by two seditions at Prato and Volterra which were easily quelled. As he advanced in manhood, however, Lorenzo gradually drew to himself and his brother the exclusive and arbitrary conduct of affairs. For nearly nine years the two Medici had enjoyed their splendid distinction and tranquil fortune, when their dream of intellectual pleasure and political security was suddenly broken by the explosion of a fearful conspiracy.

Conspiracy of the Pazzi. 1478

Among the great families who had hitherto lived in amity with the Medici, were the Pazzi of the Val d' Arno. Originally noble this powerful house had shared the general exclusion of their order from political rights, until Cosmo de' Medici, who felt the necessity of strengthening himself by the alliance of the old aristocracy, had obtained a decree for their admission into the class of commoners. Adopting the habits, when they began to share the privileges of their fellow citizens, the Pazzi entered into commerce. Their bank became one of the most celebrated in Italy; and they rivalled the Medici in wealth, while they excelled them in their illustrious descent. Cosmo, to se-

cure their friendship by the ties of blood, had bestowed his grand-daughter, the sister of Lorenzo, in marriage upon one of this distinguished family; but Lorenzo himself, entertaining an extreme jealousy of their greatness, had pursued a very opposite policy. Giovanni de' Pazzi, one of the brothers of his sister's husband, had married the only child of an opulent citizen who died intestate; and Lorenzo, to prevent the son-in-law from aggrandizing himself by the immense wealth that should thus have devolved upon his wife, caused a law to be passed by which nephews were preferred to daughters in succession to the inheritance of an intestate. This law was iniquitously gifted with a retrospective force; and thus Giovanni de' Pazzi was deprived, as Lorenzo designed, of the property of his father-in-law, who had not thought it necessary to make a will to secure it to his only child. Lorenzo followed up this injury by the careful exclusion of all the Pazzi, except his brother-in-law Guglielmo, from those offices of dignity in the state, to which their rank and influence entitled them to aspire. He thus filled the whole family with natural indignation; and the eldest brother of Guglielmo, Francesco de' Pazzi, a man of bold and violent temper, withdrew from Florence to Rome (where the Pazzi had established a branch of their firm) to escape from the pride of the Medici, which his own arrogance ill enabled him to brook. The pope, Sixtus IV., shared his enmity to the Medici; he deprived them of the office of bankers to the Holy See,

which they had hitherto held, to bestow it upon Francesco; and the common feeling, which animated the pontiff and his new agent, soon led to frequent intercourse between them, and to dangerous machinations against the rulers of Florence.

Pope Sixtus IV.

Sixtus IV. had been raised to the papal throne in 1471 on the death of Paul II., whose reign had only been distinguished by his persecution of the literary men of Rome, and by his repeated though ineffectual efforts to disturb the tranquillity of Italy. The pontificate of Sixtus was entirely devoted to the scandalous aggrandizement of his numerous nephews, or illegitimate sons; whose equivocal relationship to him and luxurious extravagance increased the indecency of their sudden exaltation from obscurity to enormous wealth and possessions. To form principalities for these individuals, Sixtus had filled Romagna with troubles; and had occasioned the Medici to feel justly alarmed for the peace of the peninsula. They had therefore afforded assistance to the signor of Castello and other Romagnal chieftains against the attacks of the papal family; and observing the formation of a close alliance between Ferdinand king of Naples and the pope, they had in 1474 united Florence in a league with the duke of Milan and the Venetian republic, to maintain the repose of northern Italy. The opposition which the Medici had thus raised to the aggrandizement of his family, had inflamed the pope with violent resentment against them; and together with one of his nephews, the count Girolamo Riario, he

His share in the plot.

readily embarked with Francesco de' Pazzi in an atrocious plot for their destruction. As the result of an open insurrection at Florence appeared hopeless, it was resolved to have recourse to assassination. Francesco Salviati, archbishop of Pisa, who had some causes of personal animosity against the Medici, eagerly engaged in the undertaking; and Francesco de' Pazzi repaired to Florence to mature the scheme. There he succeeded in inducing his uncle Jacopo de' Pazzi, the chief of his house, with others of his relations, to enter the conspiracy; which was also embraced by Jacopo Salviati, brother of the archbishop, by a son of the celebrated historian, Poggio Bracciolini, and by several ecclesiastics and adherents of the Pazzi.

The design of the conspirators was to assassinate both the brothers, Lorenzo and Giuliano, at the same instant; for the murder of one would otherwise only have the effect of putting the other upon his guard. The pope therefore wrote to the cardinal Riario, nephew of count Girolamo, a youth of only eighteen years of age whom he had just admitted into the sacred college, and who was then studying at the university of Pisa, to desire him to obey whatever directions he should receive from the archbishop of Pisa; and Salviati accordingly carried him to a seat of the Pazzi near Florence. The conspirators knew that the new cardinal must be welcomed with public entertainments, at which they hoped that the Medici might be found present together and dispatched

while unsuspicious of danger. Jacopo de' Pazzi gave a fête, to which both the brothers were accordingly invited: Lorenzo however alone came, for Giuliano was indisposed. But Lorenzo, as had been foreseen, made sumptuous preparations to receive the cardinal at his villa at Fiesole; and there the conspirators fully resolved to execute their purpose. The entertainment took place, but still Giuliano was absent; and the Pazzi, thus again disappointed, and despairing of securing the presence of the younger Medici at a second festival to be given by his brother, resolved to defer their enterprise no longer than the following Sunday, when the cardinal was to be present at high mass at the cathedral of Florence:—an occasion on which it was thought that neither of the Medici could with decency absent himself. There it was determined that, in the midst of the most solemn offices of religion, the crime of assassination should be perpetrated; that the elevation of the host, as the kneeling victims bowed their heads, should be the signal of murder; and that, at the moment of the sacrifice, the archbishop Salviati and others should seize the palace of the signiory, while Jacopo de' Pazzi was to raise the city by the cry of liberty. Francesco de' Pazzi charged himself, together with Bernardo Bandini, a daring and devoted partizan of his house, with the assassination of Giuliano. Giovan Battista Montesecco, a condottiere in the papal service, had boldly engaged with his single hand to dispatch Lorenzo, while he understood that the murder was

to take place at a festival. But when Montesecco found that it was before the altar of God that it was intended he should shed the blood of a man, whose hospitality he had enjoyed, his courage failed him. The soldier declared that he dared not add sacrilege to murder and perfidy; and his office was committed to two ecclesiastics, who had not the same scruples.

When the appointed morning arrived, the cardinal Riario and Lorenzo de' Medici were already at the cathedral, the church was rapidly filling with people, and still Giuliano de' Medici did not appear. The conspirators began to dread another disappointment, and Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini left the cathedral to seek for him, and to persuade him that his absence would be invidiously remarked. Every feeling which revolts at murder and treachery is strengthened, when we learn the terms of familiarity on which these men had just been living with him, whom they were luring to death. They passed their arms round his waist, as if to draw him in playful violence towards the church, but in reality to feel whether he had put on his cuirass, which he wore with habitual timidity under his garments. But Giuliano was indisposed; he had discarded his armour; and so unsuspicious was he at that hour of impending evil, that he even left at home the dagger which usually hung at his side. As he entered the church and approached the altar, the two conspirators kept close to him; the two priestly assassins had also fixed themselves in the

Murder of Giuliano de' Medici.

throng beside Lorenzo; and when the host was raised, and every knee was bending in adoration, Bandini struck his dagger into the breast of Giuliano. The victim staggered and fell, and Francesco de' Pazzi threw himself upon him with such blind fury, that besides inflicting on him several blows with his dagger, the least a death, he grievously wounded himself in the thigh. At the same moment, the two priests attacked Lorenzo. One of them struck at his throat, but missed his aim; and the blow, which only slightly grazed Medici in the neck, merely startled him to his defence. Rapidly throwing his cloak about his left arm for a shield, he drew his sword and courageously defended himself, until his attendants came to his aid. The priests then lost courage and fled; but Bandini, his dagger reeking with the blood of Giuliano, now endeavoured to rush upon Lorenzo, and stabbed one of his train to the heart who interposed to defend him. Lorenzo however was by this time surrounded by his friends, who hastily sought refuge with him in the sacristy and closed its brazen doors. Meanwhile the whole church was filled with consternation; and the first moment of surprise and alarm had no sooner passed, than the friends of the Medici collected from all quarters, and conveyed Lorenzo in safety to his palace.

During this scene in the cathedral, the archbishop Salviati, with a strong band of conspirators, attempted as had been concerted to seize the palace of the signiory and the persons of the

magistrates. After filling the outer apartments with his followers, the archbishop obtained by his rank an easy admission to the presence of the gonfalonier and priors who were sitting. But instead of immediately attacking them he hesitated; and his manner betrayed so much confusion, that the suspicion of the gonfalonier being excited, he rushed from the hall and assembled the guards and servants of the palace. The doors were secured; and the conspirators were furiously assaulted by the magistrates and their attendants with such motley weapons and instruments as the furniture of the palace afforded. Dispersed and intimidated, they made but a feeble resistance, and were all either slaughtered on the spot, hurled from the windows, or made prisoners. Jacopo de' Pazzi, followed by a troop of soldiery, attempted to succour them, after an abortive effort to excite the citizens to revolt by crying liberty through the streets. But the magistrates held the palace until numerous citizens came to their aid, and Jacopo, seeing that the game was lost, fled into the country.

Overthrow of the conspirators.

The fate of most of the conspirators was not long delayed. The archbishop Salviati was hanged from a window of the public palace, even in his prelatical robes. Francesco de' Pazzi, who exhausted by loss of blood from his self-inflicted wound, had been obliged to confine himself to his uncle's house, was dragged from his bed, and suspended from the same place of execution. Jacopo himself, being discovered and arrested in the

country by the peasantry, was brought into the city a few days afterwards, and similarly executed with another of his nephews, whose knowledge of the conspiracy was his only crime, for he had refused to engage in it; and the whole of the devoted family of the Pazzi were condemned to exile, except Guglielmo, the brother-in-law of Lorenzo. The priests who had attacked Lorenzo, the condottiere Montesecco, and above seventy inferior persons besides suffered death; and even Bernardo Bandini, though he escaped for a time to Constantinople, paid the forfeit of his crimes; for Lorenzo had sufficient influence with Mahomet II. to cause him to be seized and sent to Florence for execution. The young cardinal Riario, rather an instrument than an accomplice in the conspiracy, was with difficulty saved by Lorenzo from being torn to pieces by the fury of the Florentine mob; but his attendants were mercilessly butchered by them.

Lorenzo de' Medici, sole ruler of Florence.

The conspiracy of the Pazzi strikingly displayed the absoluteness of the Medicean dominion over the will and affections of the people of Florence. So far from shewing any disposition to join the Pazzi in revolt, the populace were filled with grief and fury at the murder of Giuliano, and at the peril in which Lorenzo had stood. They had flown to arms to defend the Medici; and they paraded Florence for whole days to commit every outrage upon the dead bodies of the conspirators which still defiled the streets. The cry of " Palle!

CHAP. VII. PART II.

Palle!"—the armorial device of the Medici *—continually resounded through the city; and the memory of the tragedy wherein Giuliano had fallen, was always associated in the public mind with a deepened and affectionate interest for the safety of Lorenzo, and with an attachment to his person which lasted to his death. †

State of the Milanese duchy.

When Sixtus IV. found that the conspiracy of the Pazzi had failed, he immediately followed up the flagitious part which he had taken in that plot, by disturbing all Italy with the more open pursuit of his implacable resentment against Lorenzo de' Medici. But before we observe the continued effects of the fierce and unholy spirit, by which this pontiff disgraced the assumed sanctity of his office, we may pause for a few moments to notice the condition of the Milanese duchy. Francesco Sforza, whose enlightened policy and good government as a sovereign had almost atoned for the perfidious career through which he had reached his throne, survived the war of the Nea-

* The family arms of the Medici were six golden balls (palle d'oro). Their name, and this device of the balls or pills, seem to agree strongly enough in referring to medicine as their original occupation. Yet their flatterers were not ashamed to invent lying legends of all sorts, to reconcile these armorial bearings with an ancestry of heroes.

† The authorities which I have consulted for the domestic history of Florence, from the commencement of the government of Cosmo de' Medici to the conspiracy of the Pazzi inclusive, are Macchiavelli, Ist. Fior. parts of bb. v., vii., viii.; Scipione Ammirato, Ist. Fior. parts of bb. xxi., xxiii., xxiv.

politan succession only two years. At the moment of his death, his eldest legitimate son, Galeazzo Maria, was in France at the head of an army, with which he had sent him to assist Louis XI. in the civil wars of that kingdom. But the quiet possession of the ducal states was secured to Galeazzo Maria, by the wise measures of his mother Bianca Visconti; and hastening his return, he assumed the crown without opposition. Though not without ability, the new duke had few qualities in common with his father. He indeed faithfully preserved his alliance with Florence, and maintained vigorous order in his dominions. But he was vain and arrogant, pusillanimous and cruel; and in the detestable vices of his private life he closely resembled that race of odious tyrants, the Visconti, from whom he was descended in the maternal line. In the first years of his reign, he repaid the affection and prudent counsels of his amiable mother, Bianca, with base ingratitude. He obliged her to quit his court, and such was the opinion which he had already taught his subjects to conceive of his wickedness, that her sudden death was universally attributed to poison administered by his orders.

Death of Francesco Sforza. 1466

Reign of his son, Galeazzo Maria.

The subsequent conduct of Galeazzo Maria might well countenance the belief of even so revolting a crime. While he revelled with ferocious delight in the infliction of frightful cruelties upon all who fell under his displeasure, his debaucheries were attended with circumstances of intolerable outrage, and carried shame and deso-

His crimes,

CHAP. VII. PART II.

lation into the principal houses of Milan. Not contented with forcibly tearing wives and daughters from their homes, he gloried in obliging their natural protectors to become the instruments of their dishonor. The discarded objects of his brutality were then abandoned to his guards, and the last insult of the tyrant was to make a public boast and a derision of their misery. For ten years his degraded subjects had endured his atrocities, when a young man of noble family, Girolamo Olgiato, whose beloved sister had fallen a sacrifice to the passions of this monster, resolved to rid the earth of his crimes. His design was embraced by two other kindred spirits, who shared his injuries or his detestation of an insupportable tyranny. As Galeazzo Maria was moving in his ducal state through the church of St. Stefano during a public festival, the three conspirators suddenly approached him, and together struck their daggers at the same instant into his body. The tyrant fell dead on the spot; but the abject crowd which filled the church wanted courage to protect their deliverers. The accomplices of Girolamo were killed by the guards of the duke in attempting to fly; and though the youth himself escaped at the moment to his home, his parent refused him the shelter, which a friend afforded. He was shortly discovered and executed, after enduring frightful tortures with unshaken constancy and a firm conviction of the justice of his cause.

and violent death. 1476

Minority of his son, Gian Galeazzo.

It had doubtless been the hope of the conspirators, that the people would seize the moment of their liberation from tyranny by the death of Galeazzo to establish a republican constitution. But the Milanese proved that the debasing influence of a long servitude had disqualified them for the assertion of the common rights of humanity. While the ducal government was paralyzed by the sudden fate of the tyrant, they made not the slightest effort to strike for freedom; and Gian Galeazzo, the son of the late duke, a boy of eight years of age, was suffered peaceably to succeed him. The duchess Bonne of Savoy, the widow of Galeazzo Maria, took the reins of government for her child, and all the states of Italy assured her by their ambassadors of friendship and protection. The regency of Bonne deservedly acquired the reputation of prudence and justice; but her station was one of exceeding difficulty, for her husband had left several brothers of dangerous character. The youngest of the five uncles of the infant duke refused to trouble the duchess-mother; but the four others, Sforza, who held the dignity of duke of Bari by the gift of the king of Naples, Ludovico, sirnamed the Moor, Ottaviano, and Ascanio, leagued to usurp all the authority of the state. Galeazzo Maria, who knew their restless ambition, had removed them from his court, but immediately after his death they hastened to Milan; and, to overthrow the government of Bonne, laboured to revive the old quarrel of the Guelfs and Ghibelins by declaring themselves the

CHAP. VII. PART II.

supporters of the latter faction. But the administration of the duchess-mother was firmly sustained by a man of talents and probity, Cecco Simoneta, who after justly acquiring the confidence of Francesco Sforza, had served his son Galeazzo with equal fidelity, and by his abilities and virtue had neutralized many of the caprices and extravagancies of that execrable tyrant.

Simoneta was now the chief minister and chosen counsellor of the duchess-mother, and it would have been well for herself and her son, if she had never swerved from his guidance. After a vain attempt to conciliate the uncles of the young duke, by admitting the leaders of the faction which they had revived into the council of regency, Simoneta found that they were still plotting against the duchess and himself. Penetrating their designs, he caused some of their accomplices to be arrested, and the brothers then flew to arms, and endeavoured to excite an insurrection in the capital against the minister. But none of the citizens joined them; they were compelled to retire from Milan; and one of them, Ottaviano, perished on his retreat in attempting to swim across the Adda. Through the influence of Simoneta, the three survivors with their principal adherents were sentenced, by a decree of the council of regency, to a banishment in which they still remained in the following year; when the hostilities which the pope excited in the peninsula gave them but too favorable an occasion for renewing their machinations.

1477

Continued persecution of Lorenzo de' Medici by Sixtus IV.

As Sixtus IV., in his rage at the failure of the conspiracy of the Pazzi, threw off the mask and declared himself overtly against Lorenzo de' Medici, he did not even attempt an exculpation of his notorious share in that plot. But affecting indignation and horror at the outrage offered to the church in the ignominious death of the archbishop of Pisa, he immediately declared Florence excommunicated, if her citizens should fail to deliver up Lorenzo and all the perpetrators of that act, to the vengeance of the ecclesiastical tribunals. At the same time he published an alliance, which he had already formed against the Medici with Ferdinand of Naples and with Sienna; for that republic too had some petty causes of hostility to Florence. War was now declared by the league against Lorenzo; the Florentine territory was invaded by their troops; and the pope reiterated spiritual fulminations in support of his temporal arms.

Unjust war against Florence, undertaken by that pope and the king of Naples.

The Florentine government vainly endeavoured to deprecate the violence of the pontiff, by acknowledging their fault in having themselves put to death the archbishop and the priests his accomplices, who were subject only to ecclesiastical jurisdiction; but finding this submission without effect, they had recourse to more energetic measures for the protection of their state. Preparing vigorously for the defence of their frontiers, they addressed themselves at the same time to most of the powers of Italy and of Europe; they represented the iniquitous conduct of the pope; and

they convoked at Florence a synod of the Tuscan clergy to appeal to a general council against his tyranny and spiritual sentences. These proceedings were not without their weight. The king of France and other princes remonstrated in a high tone with the pope against the prosecution of an unjust war; and though the Venetians, whose contest with the Turks was not yet concluded, abstained from actively engaging in the impending hostilities, the Milanese regency firmly resolved to support the cause of Lorenzo de' Medici, and the duke of Ferrara undertook the personal command of the Florentine forces.

Sixtus IV., however, was not the less strongly bent on his purposes: and his league with Ferdinand of Naples rendered him still very superior in strength to Lorenzo de' Medici and his allies. The pope gave the command of the numerous forces, which he levied among the Romagnol signors, to Federigo of Urbino, whom he had some years before raised to the ducal dignity; and Alfonso duke of Calabria, son of king Ferdinand, joining that celebrated captain with a Neapolitan army, the confederates gained several successes against the Florentine troops under the duke of Ferrara; who proved himself either faithless to the cause which he had embraced, or destitute of military skill. Meanwhile Sixtus and Ferdinand bestirred themselves to deprive the Florentines of the powerful aid of Milan. By their intrigues they induced the Adorni, who governed Genoa under the Milanese regency, to throw off that

Their intrigues to deprive the Florentines of the Milanese alliance.

yoke; and a numerous army, which the duchess Bonne dispatched into Liguria to support the authority of her son, was defeated by the Genoese with signal disgrace. Though a new revolution afterwards placed the Fregosi at the head of the government of Genoa, the continued independence of that state was equally destructive to the Milanese authority, and therefore injurious to the interests of Lorenzo de' Medici and his country.

The pope now applied himself to persuade yet more dangerous enemies than the Genoese to attack the duchess-regent of Milan. By the machinations of his legate and priestly emissaries, he played upon the simple devotion of the Swiss, and animated their religious and warlike spirit in his service against Milan: as if the contest, into which his criminal passions had hurried him, had been the cause of God. A large body of the Swiss invaded Lombardy, and though they made but one desultory campaign, this short expedition not only augmented the reputation of their prowess in Italy by a defeat which they gave the Milanese army, but embarrassed the counsels of the duchess, and effectually diverted her resources from the succour of Florence. The storm which threatened the government of Bonne from the Alps had scarcely been calmed by the prudent negociations of her minister Simoneta, when the uncles of the young duke of Milan, in the alliance of the pope, and attended by some Genoese troops, entered Lombardy from their exile. The eldest was now dead, not without suspicion of having been

1479

poisoned by his brother Ludovico the Moor, who succeeded him in his duchy of Bari. On the appearance of the Sforza in the Milanese states, they declared that they only came to deliver their young nephew and his mother herself from the authority of Simoneta; and under this pretence they took possession of a great number of the strong places of Lombardy, which opened their gates to them. The court of Bonne was at the time agitated by cabals against her minister; and, at the persuasion of his enemies, she had the weakness to enter into an accommodation with Ludovico and to invite him to Milan.

When Simoneta learnt the determination of the duchess, he declared to her that the part which she had taken would entail destruction on him and the loss of power to her. Ludovico had scarcely entered the capital, when the prophecy of her veteran and faithful counsellor began its fulfilment. Almost the first act of Ludovico was to cause Simoneta to be arrested, with the principal persons who were attached to his party. After lingering for nearly a year in prison, where he was treated with frightful barbarity, the old minister was finally beheaded; and Ludovico then declared his nephew Gian Galeazzo, though only twelve years old, of sufficient age to assume the reins of government for himself. This was merely to afford a plea for the removal of the duchess from power; many of her counsellors were imprisoned, plundered, and exiled; and she was thus driven by mortification and insults to withdraw

from the capital. From this epoch Ludovico the Moor, with the air of directing the judgment of the young duke, usurped in his name all the authority of the state, and became in fact the sovereign of his nephew's dominions. His alliance with the pope and with Ferdinand of Naples had placed him in opposition to Florence, and that state might thenceforth expect to number Milan among her enemies.

Ludovico Sforza usurps the government of Milan in the name of the young duke.

1480

Progress of the war against Florence. Disasters of that state.

Meanwhile the progress of the war in Tuscany had been for two years exceedingly unfavorable to Florence. Lorenzo de' Medici, though absolutely directing the affairs of that state, as if he had been her legitimate sovereign, did not shew himself at the head of her armies. His absence from the field was probably occasioned by his consciousness that he had neither experience nor talent for military command; but the want of some controlling authority in the Florentine camp was fatally evinced. The duke of Ferrara, and the chieftains of inferior rank serving with their bands in Florentine pay, despised the interference of the republican commissaries who attended their movements. They consumed the resources of the state, and passed the season for active operations, in violent disagreements among themselves; while the confederates, under the dukes of Calabria and Urbino, ravaged or conquered great part of the Florentine territory. Lorenzo de' Medici, in the midst of these reverses, did not however lose courage. He actively and successfully negociated

CHAP. VII. PART II.

for the assistance of Venice, now delivered from her Turkish war; and in concert with that republic, he planned the revival of the Angevin pretensions upon Naples. Though the Venetians still hung back from becoming principals in the war, their ambassadors, together with those of Florence, made overtures to Regnier II., duke of Lorraine, on whom the Angevin rights had devolved through the female line; and that prince eagerly listened to their proposals.

Discontent of the people.

But the people of Florence did not share the spirit of their leader. Their state was exhausted and desolated, their commerce was almost destroyed, and their burthens were hourly becoming more ruinous, in the support of an unfortunate war; which had been undertaken and endured, not to protect the true interests of Florence, but for the personal safety of the individual who governed them. They began openly to manifest their disgust and discontent; and Lorenzo, after the alarming experience of two disastrous campaigns and the loss of the Milanese alliance, had to dread the change of the popular affection and the overthrow of his own authority. Some decisive step became necessary on his part, when the inaction of a truce, which was unexpectedly proposed by the duke of Calabria, gave the people a dangerous leisure to brood over their distresses. The cessation of hostilities, however, more fortunately afforded him an opening for the adoption of a measure, than which there appeared no other

resource, while it was in itself both wise and generous. He resolved to proceed immediately to Naples, and to commit himself into the hands of king Ferdinand, though his avowed enemy, with the hope of discovering how that monarch was secretly affected, and of persuading him of the impolicy of continuing a war, the prolongation of which could gratify only the rancour of the pontiff, or his desire of aggrandizing his family.

Mission to the king of Naples, generously hazarded by Lorenzo de' Medici.

This enterprise was not without its imminent danger from the faithless temper of Ferdinand; but Lorenzo probably judged, with the penetration and foresight which marked his character, that the interests of that prince would render him favorable to a pacification. By voluntarily absenting himself from Florence, he would both convince the world that he was not the tyrant of his country, who feared to trust himself among enemies under the simple guarantee of the rights of an ambassador; and that, if necessary, he was prepared to make a noble devotion of his safety and life to the interests of his fellow-citizens, who had suffered so much in his personal cause. He accordingly quitted Florence, and being provided with formal authority to treat in the name of the republic with the king, passed by sea to Naples, where he was received with distinguished honors.

He persuades Ferdinand to conclude peace with Florence.

Ferdinand had entered into the war against Lorenzo de' Medici merely from the ordinary motives of ambition, and not, like Sixtus, for the indulgence of personal animosity. He therefore desired to pursue the contest no longer than

suited his political interests, and these seemed now to demand peace. His son the duke of Calabria, during his campaigns in Tuscany, had acquired so decided an ascendancy in the factions of Sienna, that he hoped to establish his sovereign authority over that stormy commonwealth. Since the revolt of Genoa from Milan, that republic also had fallen much into dependance upon Naples; and the revolution in the Milanese government had been the means of extending the same influence into Lombardy. To pursue his intrigues in these several quarters, and to strengthen a growing power, the repose of a peace was necessary to Ferdinand. No object remained to induce him to continue the war; and he was therefore the more disposed to listen to the overtures of Lorenzo, whose attractive qualities perhaps gained upon his personal regard, and whose suggestions had certainly more weight upon his fears. Lorenzo reminded the king of the danger to which his throne was exposed from the claims of the house of Anjou: that it was easier for the Florentines to revenge themselves against their enemies, by calling in a French prince who pretended to the crown of Naples, than it would be to protect Italy afterwards from the consequences of thus introducing a foreign power to mingle in her quarrels; and that the common interests of the Florentines and of Ferdinand himself should teach them to prefer a faithful alliance with each other, to a senseless war between their states. These considerations were not new to the king, and

made a strong impression upon him. But he detained Lorenzo at his court, to observe whether his removal from Florence produced any revolution there. Finding that state, on the contrary, continue its tranquil obedience to the Medicean party even in the absence of its chief, Ferdinand signed a peace with him as the ambassador of his republic, restored all his conquests, and interchanged a mutual guarantee of dominion, upon the simple condition that his son should be taken into Florentine pay with an annual stipend of 60,000 florins. This treaty adjusted, Lorenzo hastened his return to Florence, where the grateful joy and increased affection of the people enthusiastically greeted him, on the successful termination of his mission, as the benefactor and saviour of his country.

The condition of that state still critical.

But peace with Ferdinand did not release Florence from more than one cause of anxiety. The pope was still obstinately resolved to pursue Lorenzo de' Medici to destruction by the continuance of the war; and the duke of Calabria, instead of withdrawing the Neapolitan troops from Tuscany, remained at Sienna, weaving his toils about that republic, and still menacing the surrounding country. But just when Lorenzo had most reason to dread an approaching crisis, an event suddenly occurred which paralyzed all Italy with terror, induced the pope at once in his panic to abandon the indulgence of his rancour, and obliged the duke of Calabria to evacuate Sienna and to march to the defence of his father's domi-

Landing of a Turkish army near Otranto.

nions. This was the debarkation near Otranto of a formidable Turkish army. Mahomet II., who was still living, and who claimed the provinces of southern Italy as ancient dependencies of the sceptre of Constantinople, seriously meditated the subjugation of all Italy; and his enterprise against Otranto was only intended as a prelude to more extensive plans of conquest. In undertaking it he was instigated by the Venetians, who in their jealousy of the late reconciliation between Lorenzo de' Medici and Ferdinand of Naples, did not hesitate to concert the ruin of the latter, even at the hazard of delivering the whole peninsula into the hands of the infidels.

Universal terror of Italy.

It is difficult, in the modern decay of the Ottoman power, to conceive the fear and horror which, during the fifteenth century, its gigantic and rapid growth produced throughout Christendom. Sixtus IV., to whose distempered apprehension the Turks seemed already at the gates of Rome, addressed bulls to all Christian princes, and especially to the powers of Italy, earnestly exhorting them to peace among themselves and common war against the infidels. In his terror he set them the example by voluntarily offering to accept the submission of the Florentines, which he had hitherto so obstinately refused. A solemn embassy was accordingly sent to him of some of the principal citizens of Florence, who threw themselves at his feet, confessed that their state had sinned against the church, and implored his pardon. The haughty pontiff in reply reproached them in

violent terms for their disobedience to the Holy See, but concluded by granting them absolution, removing the interdict from their city, and agreeing to equitable terms of peace.

Peace granted by the pope to Florence.

Abrupt termination of the Turkish enterprise.

The Turks, on their landing near Otranto, had immediately laid siege to that important city; and as the place was unprepared for defence, they in a few days, notwithstanding the gallant resistance of the people, entered it by the breach and made a horrible massacre of the inhabitants. But immediately after this success, Mahomet II. recalled the main force of the expedition, leaving a strong garrison of above seven thousand men in Otranto. The duke of Calabria, being hastily summoned by his father with his army from Tuscany and joined by numerous reinforcements, laid siege to the Turkish garrison by land and sea. The infidels had however already assembled a powerful armament with 25,000 troops on the opposite shores of the Adriatic, to relieve Otranto and pursue their conquests in Italy, when an abrupt termination was put to their designs by the death of Mahomet II., and the civil war which broke out between his sons. Despairing of succour during this distracted state of the Ottoman empire, the Turkish garrison of Otranto capitulated upon honorable terms, which were however immediately violated.

1481

Renewed ambition of Sixtus IV.

The death of Mahomet II., the fierce conqueror of Constantinople, was hailed by all the Italian powers, as a deliverance from the greatest peril to which Christendom had ever been exposed. Ac-

cordingly the pope was no sooner thus released from the dismay which had so violently agitated him, than he immediately laboured to disturb the repose that Italy had only just begun to enjoy since the late war. Thenceforth he gave the reins to his ambition of aggrandizing his favorite nephew Girolamo Riario, count of Imola, to gratify whose interests and passions he had already so long embroiled the peninsula. Sixtus IV. now found a spirit which responded to his own in the councils of Venice. That ambitious republic was also freed from alarm of the Turkish power; and grasping at an extension of her territory towards Tuscany, she eagerly listened to the proposals of Sixtus and his nephew to despoil the house of Este and partition its states. The Venetians easily made an occasion of quarrel with Ercole, the reigning duke of Ferrara; and the pope joined them in a declaration of war, without even troubling himself to find a plea for this aggression. Several of the minor signors of Italy joined this league of the pope and the Venetians; but the king of Naples, the duke of Milan, the marquis of Mantua, and the Florentines, could not tamely suffer the spoliation of the Ferrarese dominions to enrich the papal family and more especially the Venetians, who were already so powerful. These four powers, with other lesser states, therefore formed a counter-league for the defence of the duke of Ferrara; and thus Italy was agitated from one extremity to the other by a general war, which commenced in all quarters.

His league with Venice to despoil the house Este.

1482

New war thus excited in Italy.

Its progress.

We shall find no temptation to follow the events of this contest, in which, as most of the parties were rather lukewarm allies than principals, the operations of their mercenary armies were even more languid and indecisive than was usual in that age. The duke of Ferrara, notwithstanding the imposing array of his protectors, was the chief sufferer, since his enemies invaded and dismembered his states with much more zeal than his friends defended them. His ruin seemed hourly advancing, his protectors were gradually abandoning him, and all was prosperity with the league of the pope and the Venetians, when Sixtus, upon some sudden and unexplained caprice—whether jealous of the republic, offended at slights evinced by her senate to his nephew, or tempted by secret offers from the king of Naples—destroyed the work of his own hands, and signed a peace with Ferdinand, by which he guaranteed to the house of Este the integrity of its dominions. Notwithstanding the defection of Sixtus, the Venetians still resolved to pursue their conquests; and though the pope now placed himself at the head of the league for the defence of the duke of Ferrara and excommunicated his late allies, they fearlessly prepared to resist him, and to support the war against all the powers of Italy. They trusted perhaps as much to the speedy separation of a confederacy composed of such discordant and various materials, as to their own resources; and though the league gained some trifling advantages, such success brought no relief to the duchy of

1483

Ferrara, which was exhausted alike by the presence of invaders and defenders. In effect the league soon approached its dissolution. The allies grew weary of the war; the duke of Ferrara must be ruined by its continuance; and Venice alone was obstinately resolved upon pressing it, or at least retaining a part of her conquests.

Peace of Bagnolo.

Under these circumstances a peace was at last accommodated by negociation between the Venetians and Ludovico Sforza, the real sovereign of Milan. By this treaty, which was afterwards ratified by the ambassadors of the other belligerents at Bagnolo, the Venetians were left in possession of a considerable extent of territory about Rovigo, at the expence of the house of Este. The interests of several of the weaker powers, as well as of the duke of Ferrara, were more or less sacrificed to those of the stronger; but the pope was more dissatisfied than any of the other allies, for the peace offered no acquisitions to his nephew. He refused to confirm its stipulations; but he was now incapable of opposing resistance to them. He had already been alarmingly attacked by gout in the stomach, and the intelligence of this treaty is said to have thrown him into a paroxysm of passion, which hastened his dissolution. During his whole pontificate the sole objects of Sixtus IV. had been to aggrandize his worthless relatives, and to gratify his fierce animosities, at the expence of every upright principle and duty. To accomplish these ends he had shrunk from no crime; he had felt no compunction in devastating

Death of Sixtus IV. 1484

the peninsula with injustice and bloodshed; and his last emotion was regret that he was compelled to leave Italy at peace. *

Pope Innocent VIII.

The individual of their body whom the cardinals in conclave now seated in the vacant chair of St. Peter, was in character and habits very different from the late pontiff. Innocent VIII. was as indolent and feeble in spirit, as Sixtus IV. had been active and turbulent. Like his predecessor, indeed, the new pope was surrounded by relatives, for whose interests he was ready to make any sacrifice of the public good. Seven children were the results of his various amours; and forgetting the decent practice of his church, which might have taught him by frequent examples to disguise the claims of these objects upon his paternal affection under the plea of mere consanguinity, he introduced a novel scandal into the papacy by openly acknowledging them all. But neither Innocent nor his children were of a restless and enterprising temperament. They did not disturb Italy by their crimes like Sixtus and his family; and debauchery, extortion, and unblushing venality remained the only reproaches of the papal court. Innocent himself was a well-intentioned man; but he was constantly governed by unworthy favorites, to whom he permitted every

* Macchiavelli, b. viii. pp. 382—427. Scipione Ammirato, b. xxiv. p. 118, ad fin. xxv. ad p. 160. Marin Sanuto, Vite de' Duchi di Venez. pp. 1212—1233. The best modern accounts are in the compilations of Daru, Hist. de Venise, vol. iii. pp. 1—22. Sismondi, cc. 84, 85—88. and Roscoe, Life of Lorenzo de' Medici, vol. i. p. 268—311.

CHAP. VII. PART II.

irregularity; and his domestic administration was sullied by the vices of his dependents.

His quarrel with the king of Naples.

Innocent VIII. had been indebted for his first elevation in the church to the patronage of Ferdinand of Naples; and that monarch naturally expected to find in him a faithful adherent. But experience had shewn that the popes were seldom remarkable for gratitude to the early founders of their fortunes, and more frequently desirous of making their former masters feel that the relations of dependance were reversed. Immediately after his accession to the tiara, Innocent began to assume a haughty tone towards his old patron, and demanded the payment of the feudal tribute from the Neapolitan kingdom to the Holy See, with which Sixtus IV. had dispensed. As the breach which this demand created gradually widened, the ambition of the pope was seduced by the state of the Neapolitan kingdom to attempt the total overthrow of the Aragonese dynasty.

Discontent of the Neapolitan nobles against Ferdinand.

Ferdinand had always been deservedly unpopular with his subjects. Besides the general rigour and cruelty of his government, his reign had been distinguished by many acts of bad faith and perfidy. After his triumph over John of Anjou, he had violated the solemn obligation of oaths to ruin the barons who had supported that prince. He had seized the duke of Suessa, imprisoned him, and despoiled him of his states; he had inveigled into his power the celebrated condottiere Jacopo Piccinino, and caused him to be murdered in his dungeon; and after striking terror into the no-

bles by these iniquitous proceedings, he had bruised their power with a rod of iron, and equally oppressed them and the rest of his people. The general disaffection produced by his tyranny was increased by the character of his eldest son. If the Neapolitans justly feared and detested the relentless and arbitrary temper of their reigning monarch, they had still more reason to anticipate with abhorrence the rule of his successor. Alfonso, duke of Calabria, had already shewn himself more tyrannical and cruel in his nature than his father, and thoroughly vicious in all his propensities. The resentment of the nobles was aggravated to the highest pitch by the violences which he committed in the royal name; and they negociated with Innocent VIII. to obtain his aid against their princes, engaging to place their kingdom, already a fief of the Holy See, under his immediate authority. The pope eagerly countenanced their discontent; and an act of treachery attempted by the duke of Calabria shortly gave him a feasible occasion for commencing hostilities against Ferdinand.

Their revolt, supported by the pope. 1485

The city of Aquila, though contained within the Neapolitan dominions, had long enjoyed a municipal independence which the duke now violated by seizing the principal citizen-noble of the place, and treacherously introducing his troops within its walls. The magistracy, after vain remonstrances with Alfonso, excited their fellow-citizens to rise in arms; the soldiery of the duke were either slain or expelled; and the people of

CHAP. VII. PART II.

Aquila then implored the papal protection. Innocent immediately sent a body of troops to their defence; and most of the Neapolitan great feudatories and barons, now secure of his support, at the same time assembled in a general congress at Melfi, and raised the standard of revolt. The count of Sarno and Antonio Petrucci, two of Ferdinand's own ministers, who had reason to dread the future oppression of the duke of Calabria, secretly entered into a correspondence with the insurgents, and the rebellion rapidly spread throughout the kingdom. To give more effect to the confederacy of the Neapolitan nobles, the pope endeavoured to gain the co-operation of Venice. But that republic, averse from engaging in new hostilities, yet, since the war of Ferrara, cherishing her enmity against the king of Naples, adopted a middle course. Her senate declined the alliance of the pope, but suffered their general Roberto di San Severino to engage in the papal service with thirty-two squadrons of their mercenary cavalry.

Alliance of Florence and Milan with Ferdinand.

In his distress Ferdinand formally applied to Florence and Milan for the succours which those states were bound by treaty to afford him. But to the consideration of Lorenzo de' Medici the king might lay some personal claim, and it was particularly to him that his solicitations were addressed. Lorenzo had lived on terms of amity with the pope ever since his accession: but he was not the less averse from seeing the papacy aggrandized by the extension of its temporal in-

fluence in southern Italy and by the fall of Ferdinand; and he was sensible of the advantages which might accrue to his family from the alliance of that monarch. He therefore earnestly engaged Florence in support of the king of Naples and in opposition to Innocent VIII.; and Ludovico Sforza from similar motives of policy threw the weight of Milan into the same scale.

General war in Italy.

None of the contending parties or their allies were thoroughly prepared for war; and Ferdinand, who conducted his affairs with remarkable skill, endeavoured to temporize with his barons by an affected moderation, which, although they utterly distrusted him, was not without its profit for his cause. Retaining only an army of observation to keep the insurgents in check without attacking them, he dispatched his chief force under the duke of Calabria into the states of the church to unite with the Florentine and Milanese contingents, and to combat San Severino and the papal troops before they could arrive to the support of the Neapolitan barons. After a considerable interval of inaction, the two armies of the duke and of San Severino met at the bridge of Lamentana. So ridiculous had Italian warfare become that, during an encounter of several hours between the hostile array of cuirassiers, not a single soldier was either killed or wounded; but as the army of the duke of Calabria at last pushed their opponents off the field and took some prisoners, this bloodless contest had all the effects of

Bloodless encounter at Lamentana. 1486

a victory for the Neapolitan prince, who immediately began to approach towards Rome.

Innocent terrified into peace.

Although Innocent VIII. had ambitiously involved himself in the design to overthrow the king of Naples, he had neither energy nor talents for the successful conduct of a project of such magnitude and difficulty. He suffered himself to be thrown into consternation by the first reverse; and Lorenzo de' Medici, seizing the auspicious moment for his ally, easily succeeded in terrifying the imbecile pope into the abandonment of his schemes, by insisting to him on the danger of his position. Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabella, the sovereigns of the united kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, who now for the first time began to interfere in the politics of Italy, also exhorted Innocent to peace, and offered their good offices for concluding the war. Having inherited the crown of Sicily with that of Aragon, Ferdinand the Catholic had an immediate interest in promoting the repose of Italy for the security of his insular dominions, while he was engaged with his queen in the conquest of Granada. By the mediation of the Spanish sovereigns and the exertions of Lorenzo de' Medici, a treaty was concluded at Rome between the pope and Ferdinand of Naples, by which the king agreed to all the demands of Innocent: to pay the disputed tribute to the Holy See with all its arrears, to pardon the rebel barons, to suffer them to dwell unmolested in their castles and domains, and to acknowledge both

them and the community of Aquila as immediate feudatories of the pope.

Subsequent cruelties of Ferdinand against his barons.

But it was farthest from the intentions of the perfidious Ferdinand to observe any of these conditions. As soon as he found that peace was secured, he immediately imprisoned the count of Sarno and Antonio Petrucci, and under pretence that they had not been included by name in the provisions of the treaty, confiscated their property and put them to a cruel death. For a short time after this alarming earnest of his spirit, he continued to observe some respect for the barons who had confederated, until having assured himself that the pope was no longer prepared to resist him, or to afford them protection, he seized upon Aquila and expelled the papal garrison. He next caused many of the principal barons who had been in arms against him to be arrested and massacred in prison; and having by these atrocities delivered himself from the fear of his nobles, he finally threw off all deference for the pope himself, refused to discharge the tribute which he had promised, and arrogated to himself the nomination of ecclesiastical benefices in his dominions. Innocent dared neither to shew at the moment any resentment at these insults, nor at the audacious murder of adherents, whom he was solemnly bound to protect. Three years afterwards he was induced, by the hope of assistance from France, to declare war anew against Ferdinand; but finding the French sovereign not in readiness to support him, all his hostility was confined to the

promulgation of a few bulls, and closed by a new treaty; which renewed the promise of tribute like *the last, and was similarly violated by Ferdinand.*

War of Sarzana between Genoa and Florence.

After the conclusion of the Neapolitan war, the repose of Italy was scarcely disturbed for eight years, until the too famous invasion of the French, which occasioned the ruin of her independence and grandeur. The peace of Rome had however left one partial quarrel undecided. This was a dispute between Florence and Genoa, for the possession of the town of Sarzana on the confines of their states, which one of the Fregosi had seized, after the Florentines had acquired the place by purchase from his family. Conscious of his inability to preserve it, however, Agostino Fregoso had surrendered the sovereignty of the town to the great Genoese bank of St. George; and Lorenzo de' Medici, after an ineffectual endeavour to obtain the cession of the place by negociation, resolved to assert the Florentine rights by arms. A petty war had thus been produced between the two republics, and some hostilities had taken place; until the more important contest in support of Ferdinand of Naples suspended the assaults of the Florentines. The treaty of Rome had now, however, left Lorenzo de' Medici at liberty to direct the forces of Florence against Sarzana, which was besieged and taken. The war had a far more disastrous issue to the Genoese than the loss of this object of dispute. The pretence of mediating between the belligerents afforded the crafty Ludovico Sforza an occasion of

1487

carrying his intrigues into the bosom of that inconstant republic. He engaged the doge, the cardinal Paolo Fregoso, by bestowing a lady of the house of Sforza in marriage upon his natural son, to place the state under the sovereignty of Milan. But though this new connection of Fregoso filled his fellow citizens with suspicion of his designs and produced an insurrection, the party of the Adorni, which prevailed over the doge and his adherents after a furious conflict, fell precisely into the measure of which Fregoso had been suspected. The ambassadors of Ludovico the Moor were permitted to mediate between the hostile factions; an accommodation was effected, by which the cardinal-doge abdicated the supreme authority for a pension; and an Adorno assumed the government of Genoa as lieutenant of the duke of Milan.

Genoa relapses under the yoke of Milan. 1488

After the war of Sarzana was extinguished by the capture of that place, the government of Lorenzo de' Medici at Florence was materially disturbed neither by foreign nor domestic troubles; and during the short residue of his life, the tranquillity of his administration was favored by the general repose of Italy. The reputation of his personal talents and virtues, yet more than his station as the powerful ruler of Florence, certainly gave him a great and honorable influence in the political counsels of the peninsula. He had essentially proved his power to serve the king of Naples; and if motives of gratitude were incapable of actuating so odious a tyrant, he had at

General repose of Italy. Last years of Lorenzo de' Medici.

least commanded his respect. Venice was disposed for peace; the power of Ludovico Sforza at Milan was yet sufficiently precarious to induce him to court the friendship of Florence for that duchy; and the inclination of the remaining great power of Italy—the popedom—was of course wholly regulated by the character of the reigning pontiff. It was over the feeble mind of Innocent that the superior genius of Lorenzo de' Medici had acquired its most important ascendancy. Feeling his own weakness the pope, after the peace of Rome, had surrendered himself almost implicitly to the guidance of Lorenzo. If the disgraceful abandonment of the Neapolitan barons by Innocent, and his pusillanimous submission to the insults of Ferdinand, are to be attributed to Medici, his interested counsels redounded as little to his own honor as to that of the pope. Yet, on the other hand, the moderation with which Lorenzo interposed in the affairs of Romagna deservedly procured for him a high reputation for wisdom and justice, and were exceedingly advantageous to Innocent, in securing the tranquil obedience of the turbulent and faithless signors of that province to him as their feudal superior.

Lorenzo found his account in rendering these services to the pope, for he thus, and by giving one of his daughters in marriage to the eldest of Innocent's natural sons, prepared the way for the ecclesiastical grandeur of his family. The gratitude of Innocent VIII. laid the first step for the elevation of the house of Medici to the highest

honors of the Roman Church. At the ambitious solicitation of Lorenzo, the pope scandalized the religious sense of the age by bestowing the dignity of cardinal upon his second son, Giovanni de' Medici, then a boy of only thirteen years of age. The pope evinced his shame of this prostitution of his authority, for he laid an obligation upon the boy-cardinal not to assume the insignia and functions of his new dignity for three years longer; and still Giovanni, who afterwards, under the celebrated title of Leo X., was to shed increased lustre over the lettered name of Medici, was, on entering the consistory at the age of sixteen years, the youngest man who had ever sat in the papal college.

His final destruction of Florentine liberty.

While Lorenzo de' Medici was thus extending the power of his family by his external connections, he was labouring with equal solicitude to consolidate his government and to perpetuate the authority of his house over Florence. In the ambitious pursuit of these objects, he might perhaps deceive himself with the excuse that he was only providing for the tranquillity of the state, and silence the inward reproaches of conscience and patriotism by appealing to the general equity of his administration. Yet, to the memory of Lorenzo de' Medici, must the shame be attached of having completed the utter ruin of that noble fabric of Florentine liberty, which Cosmo and his son had but too successfully dilapidated. It was after his return from his dangerous mission to Ferdinand of Naples in 1480, that he availed him-

CHAP. VII. PART II.

self of the grateful enthusiasm of his fellow citizens in his favor, to deprive them of the last remains of their ancient constitution. To avoid the inconvenient remonstrances of a popular magistracy, he resolved to put an end to its authority. By the operation of a balia, the usual instrument of usurpation at Florence, he abolished the two regular legislative councils of the republic—the consiglio di popolo, and the consiglio di commune; and committed the functions of these democratical bodies to a permanent senate of seventy persons devoted to his will. The gonfaloniers and priors of arts were thenceforth to be nominated by this assembly; and though these phantoms of ancient liberty were still retained to fill the void which the total suppression of their offices would have occasioned, and to delude the people with the forms of their old republic, they were only suffered to pass idly through the vain ceremonial of the hour. At length even this illusion was insolently exposed to the public eye. A gonfalonier in retiring from office had, in conjunction with the priors, his colleagues in the signiory, ventured without consulting Lorenzo to admonish some of the inferior magistrates for a neglect of duty. For this legitimate exercise of authority, the gonfalonier was himself fined; "for it was considered," says Ammirato, "audacious that he had acted without the sanction of the PRINCE of the government"—a title now first recognized in the once free republic of Florence.

1489

The honor of the state sacrificed to save him from bankruptcy.

The interests of this prince were a superior, the dignity of the state a minor consideration. The commercial firm of the Medici had still continued its operations, notwithstanding the political grandeur of that house. But in thus incongruously mingling the functions of the prince and the merchant, Lorenzo had been unable to superintend his private affairs, and they had fallen into total ruin. His factors in the different capitals of Europe ridiculously aped the style and expenditure of royal ministers; and their mismanagement and extravagance completed the consequences of his own neglect. The moment arrived when his banks could no longer fulfil their obligations; the state was required to extricate him from his embarrassments; and so overwhelming had these become, notwithstanding the immense capital left by Cosmo, that, to save his grandson from the disgrace of bankruptcy, the public faith and credit were shamelessly violated. The interest of the national debt was diminished, several pious foundations were suppressed, and the state currency was received in taxes below its circulating value to be re-issued by the government at its full rate. The bankruptcy of Lorenzo being thus averted by that of his country, he withdrew his capital from employment in a ruinous commerce, and invested it in immense landed estates.

1490

After these transactions there is nothing either in the history of Florence, or of that of Italy in general, to demand notice until the death of Lorenzo himself. This event was hastened by

CHAP. VII. PART II.

His death. 1492

constitutional disorders, which appear to have been hereditary in his family, and which finally carried him to a premature grave, at the early age of forty-four years. His death, which was followed almost immediately by that of Innocent VIII., occurred at a fortunate moment for his glory. New and mightier actors were about to enter on the theatre of Italian politics; an epoch of gigantic ambition and signal revolutions was approaching; and the general settlement of the European kingdoms was only to prepare the desolation of the peninsula by the quarrels of foreigners. Not all the political sagacity and foresight, which were attributed to Lorenzo de' Medici, could have diverted the storm that was gathering over his country, and he must have survived only to have been crushed at last in the collision of more overwhelming powers, or to have witnessed the final degradation and misery of Italy.

Estimate of the character of Lorenzo de' Medici.

The character of this celebrated man, who is still known by the sirname of the Magnificent, has been so variously stated by literary and political partiality, that it is not easy to gather an unbiassed estimate of his virtues and merits. On the one hand it has been strangely maintained that his attachment to Italian liberty was as distinguished and sincere as his love of letters; and, on the other, the warm advocates of freedom, in natural indignation at his final and selfish destruction of the fairest among the republics of the peninsula, have perhaps not always been just to his many real excellencies. It must at least be our endea-

vour to weigh these opposite opinions in the balance of historical evidence. If we judge the personal qualities of Lorenzo de' Medici by the standard of his times, we shall find that few of his contemporaries equalled him in the moral beauty of his private life, and that not one of the Italian statesmen of that age can be compared to him in his personal exemption from flagrant and revolting crime. His mental recreations were chaste and ennobling; he was affectionate and faithful to his numerous friends, munificent and courteous in his general disposition, and exemplary in all the domestic relations. In his political dealings he was neither profligate, nor regardless of oaths, nor cruel and blood-thirsty, nor habitually perfidious. For, as no distinct charge of murder or treachery has ever been credibly established against him, the few vague imputations of guilt which he could not escape, are contradicted by the whole recorded tenor of his conduct, and should in equity be ascribed only to the dreadful frequency of such crimes; to which, in his age and country, it was believed that no politician could scruple to have recourse.

The private character, then, of Lorenzo de' Medici might even in our happier times still be deemed unsullied and noble: he is only further to be considered with reference to his public life as the statesman and the protector of learning and genius. Of him in this last capacity, it may seem scarcely within my province to speak; yet,

in noticing generally the versatility and extent of his literary talents and attainments, his pure and exquisite taste for the arts, the enthusiasm of his intellectual spirit, and his splendid patronage of philosophers, scholars, and poets, of painters, architects, and sculptors, it is here that we must rest his true glory: that of having honorably associated his name with the most brilliant epoch in the literary history of Italy. Hence it is that Lorenzo de' Medici has merited the admiration of centuries; and his panegyrists have done neither wisely nor justly in labouring to claim for him a more universal pre-eminence, as the unerring holder of the political balance of Italy, and the disinterested promoter of the happiness of Florence. In these respects his reputation has been, I think, grossly over-rated, and his fame in a great measure undeservedly bestowed. That he was an active, a prudent, and an acute politician, is certain. A tone of moderation and justice pervaded his transactions with foreign powers, and repaid him in the general estimation which it secured to him, and even in the ultimate success that it unquestionably favored. His ambition was great, but it rarely exceeded his prudence; and his thirst of power was not the mere blind avarice of dominion. There is no doubt that the brilliancy of his talents, and the public opinion of his equity, obtained for him in the latter part of his life a remarkable ascendancy in most of the cabinets of Italy; and therefore his eulogists have

taken occasion to describe him as the balance-point of the Italian potentates, whose affairs he kept in such nice equilibrium as to prevent the preponderance of any particular state. But, as Sismondi has justly remarked, there is really no sufficient evidence of this incessant action and controlling watchfulness of Lorenzo over all the motions of the states of the peninsula.

With still less foundation has it been pretended that the idea of the balance of power originated in his capacious mind. But it would be very difficult to prove to demonstration that Lorenzo even steadily pursued the system ascribed to him; and we should look in vain for its results either in his habitual maintenance of defensive alliances for the security of the weaker states, or in any other of his negociations. But this being as it may, it must at least be evident to every one who has bestowed the commonest attention upon the history of Florence, that, for full a century before the government of Lorenzo, the theory of the balance of power had been distinctly understood in her councils and put into practice in her alliances. Hence the hatred with which she inspired all the tyrants of Italy; hence her usual protection of the weak against the oppressor, her frequent coalitions with the minor powers of the peninsula, her extensive negociations by which, whenever Italy itself contained no hope of succour, she penetrated into all the courts of Europe. The enemies and precursors of Cosmo in the Florentine administration, the Guelf oligarchy, were

the earlier movers of a system, which so far from originating in his family, rather fell into decay under their selfish policy. *

I use this term of selfish policy advisedly, for it was the distinguishing characteristic of all the Medici; and that it actuated Lorenzo in his public administration to the exclusion of every opposing principle of duty to his country, and of every ennobling sentiment of patriotism, is the merited reproach of his life. To his personal security and ambition, he sacrificed the few remains of Florentine freedom which his ancestors had spared; to the aggrandizement of his family and the extension of their influence, all his negociations and alliances were directed. The lustre

* Though the government of the Guelf oligarchy was arbitrary, its policy was enlightened: its spirit was republican and national, not personal.—There is therefore a strong presumption in favour of Sismondi's opinion, that if, in the year 1447, when the Milanese attempted to establish a republic on the death of their duke Filippo Maria, the Guelf oligarchy had continued in power at Florence, they would have afforded the new state their protection, and have drawn Venice into the same cause. The plan was even conceived in the councils of Florence under Cosmo de' Medici, and only over-ruled by his private friendship for Sforza. Thus, as Sismondi observes, a great union of interest in the cause of freedom might have opposed to the ambition of the monarchs of Europe, the wealth of Florence and Milan, the fleets of Venice and Genoa, and the hardy militia of Switzerland. We may please our fancy by carrying the speculation a century farther until the revolt of the Netherlands, and imagine the effect which would have been produced on the destinies of Europe, by the completion of a chain of federal republics extending, in almost unbroken connection, from the mouths of the Rhine to the gates of Rome.

of his private virtues would secure him from being numbered with the contemporary tyrants of Italy, with Galeazzo and Ludovico Sforza, with Sixtus and with Ferdinand; but it is only as the enlightened patron of letters and art, that his memory is entitled to unqualified admiration. *

Prognostics of a new æra in the political condition of Europe.

The tranquillity of Florence and of Italy was not broken immediately after the death of Lorenzo de' Medici; and Piero, the eldest of his three sons, took possession without difficulty of his arbitrary power. But amidst the repose of the peninsula, the general aspect of Europe every where bore indications that a new æra was opening in the history of mankind; that a train of political combinations was rapidly forming, more extensive and grand in their objects, and more formidable and overwhelming in their probable results, than any which the world had hitherto known. All the monarchies of Europe, after the long anarchy of the feudal ages, had subsided into internal order, and were prepared by the consolidation of their energies, for the vigorous trial of their relative forces. France, after the death of

* Few of the great personages of history have been alternately judged with more unmeasured praise and relentless severity than Lorenzo de' Medici. The enquirer who would desire to weigh whatever may be advanced in his favor or against him, might perhaps place Roscoe and Sismondi in the opposite scales of the balance; but it has rather been my duty to study his character for myself, and if I have not been able to agree in several points of opinion with either of these respectable authorities, my dissent has at least been the result of patient examination into original evidence.

Louis XI. and during the minority of his son, had acquired a new attitude of grandeur and strength under the glorious administration of a regency; and the young sovereign Charles VIII., on assuming the reins of government at this epoch, found himself the powerful master of a great and well-organized kingdom. The whole of the Spanish peninsula, by the conquest of Granada, was united under one dynasty; and Ferdinand the Catholic had already planted the vast foundations of that empire, of which his wily policy meditated the extension from Sicily to the continent of Italy. Our own island had passed under the severe and vigorous sceptre of the Tudors; and the house of Austria, by the matrimonial acquisition of the Netherlands, had arrived at an increase of dominion, which gave a dangerous preponderance to its influence, under Maximilian, the son and successor in the imperial dignity of Frederic III.

Selfish and vicious characters of the rulers of Italy.

Thus on every side the rulers of Italy beheld the consolidation of gigantic powers, which menaced their country with impending destruction. As long as they were divided among themselves by their miserable animosities, they could not fail to perceive that their general position was one of weakness and danger. A mutual sacrifice of jarring interests, a common oblivion of petty dissensions, and a federal league of all their monarchies and republics, could alone preserve the national independence of Italy; and such an association, formed with sincerity and maintained

with good faith, would be abundantly sufficient for their protection from every effort of foreign ambition. But the treacherous and selfish spirit of their politicians rendered them incapable of founding their safety on the basis of integrity. The pre-eminence of Italy over the rest of Europe in all the arts of civilization and refinement, was not graced by public and private virtue; and we may reflect with profit, but we cannot observe with surprise, that her greatness was extinguished by her vices.

Pope Alexander VI.

The destiny of Italy was often influenced by the character of the sovereign pontiffs; and the successor, whom the conclave gave to Innocent VIII. at this critical juncture, was the most detestable of mankind. This was the cardinal Roderigo Borgia, who, under the pontifical title of Alexander VI., was to load the Romish church with its consummation of infamy. Ludovico Sforza was rendered peculiarly sensible, by the proximity of the Milanese duchy to the Alps, of the danger to which Italy was exposed from the ambition of foreigners. An alliance, which had been established in 1480, still subsisted between him and the king of Naples, the duke of Ferrara, and the Florentines; and he endeavoured to induce the rulers of those states to convince the world, by a joint embassy to the new pope, that they were determined to maintain their league for the defence of the peninsula. Such a measure might have induced Alexander VI. and the Vene-

Attempt of Ludovico Sforza to form a league for the protection of Italy against foreigners;

frustrated by the vanity of Piero de' Medici.

tians to unite in the same cause; but Piero de' Medici, who was utterly destitute of his father's prudence and enlightened policy, was led by his pride and vanity to repulse the overtures of Ludovico, and to attach himself exclusively to the king of Naples, by whose aid he hoped to convert his authority over Florence into a declared despotism under a princely title. Meanwhile he had been rapidly consuming the inheritance of his father's popularity, and had already betrayed the jealous and tyrannical spirit which might be expected to guide his administration, by banishing his two cousins, (descended from the brother of the great Cosmo,) from Florence upon some capricious suspicion.

Alarm of Sforza at the disposition of the king of Naples to protect his nephew Gian Galeazzo

The Milanese usurper soon became alarmed at the intimate connection between Medici and Ferdinand. Though his nephew, Gian Galeazzo, had now attained the full age of manhood, Ludovico still continued entirely to exclude him from the government which, ever since his boyish years, he had exercised in his name. The young duke was feeble and imbecile in character; but he had married the daughter of the duke of Calabria; and the proud and courageous spirit of the Neapolitan princess ill brooked Ludovico's usurpation of her husband's rights. She appealed to the protection of her grandfather Ferdinand; and the consequent demand of the Neapolitan king that the young duke should be put in immediate possession of his legitimate authority, in-

creased the distrust of Ludovico at the negociation between Ferdinand and Piero de' Medici. He endeavoured to secure his own power by persuading the pope, the Venetians, and the duke of Ferrara, to enter with him into a league, as a counterpoise to the union of Naples and Florence; but still apprehending the insufficiency of this measure for his protection, he addressed himself to Charles VIII. of France, and sealed the ruin of Italian independence by inviting that monarch into the peninsula.

1493

He invites Charles VIII. of France into Italy.

Claims of Charles to the crown of Naples.

The ancient pretensions of the house of Anjou to the sovereignty of Naples had now merged, as far at least as the force of testaments could transfer them, into the French crown. By the premature death of that John of Anjou, who had sustained the claims of his family against Ferdinand of Naples, his father Regnier was left without male issue. But the daughter of Regnier had therefore legally conveyed the Angevin rights to her son, another Regnier, duke of Lorraine. Her marriage into a hostile family was, however, so disagreeable to her father, that, to the prejudice of his grandson, he bequeathed his county of Provence and his pretensions over Naples to a count of Maine, his nephew; who finally, on his deathbed, transferred all his possessions and rights to his cousin, Louis XI. king of France. Louis immediately seized upon Provence, notwithstanding the better title of Regnier of Lorraine; but the prudent and crafty monarch was not seduced to

attempt the dangerous assertion of the more splendid but barren part of the Angevin inheritance. The inconsiderate vanity and weak ambition of Charles VIII. prepared him to enter with avidity on an enterprise, from which his father had wisely abstained; and when Ludovico Sforza solicited him to assert his claim upon the crown of Naples, he was easily tempted to engage in an enterprise which was favored by the prosperity, and might be supported by the resources, of his own kingdom. A treaty was speedily adjusted, by which Sforza bound himself to assist the French king in the conquest of Naples, and Charles guaranteed to the Milanese usurper the possession of his authority. Thus far Ludovico Sforza seemed to approach the consummation of his design to place the ducal crown of Milan on his own head. But the very means which he employed for the attainment of his bad purposes brought with them the punishment of his guilt. He forgot, in his eagerness to render the French the instruments of his ambition, that a prince of their nation was a competitor for the states which he was himself unjustly labouring to retain: that the duke of Orleans by his descent from Valentine Visconti claimed the ancient dominions of her family, by a prior and more legitimate title than the house of Sforza.

His treaty with Ludovico Sforza.

As soon as Charles VIII. resolved to attempt the conquest of Naples, he abandoned every other consideration, and hastened to sacrifice the real

interests of his own kingdom in the pursuit of this chimerical enterprise. He was at open war with our Henry VII. and with Maximilian king of the Romans, and on bad terms with Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. To all these sovereigns he made most improvident concessions, to bind them by treaty not to disturb his expedition into Italy or the peace of France in his absence. At the same time to conciliate the favor of Christian Europe for his attack upon Naples, he solemnly and publicly declared that, after the assertion of his just rights, it was his ultimate design to carry his arms from Italy against the empire of the Turkish infidels.

Preparations of Ferdinand of Naples for defence.

When intelligence of the hostile designs of Charles VIII. reached the old king of Naples, he exerted every effort of skilful negociation to avert the storm, or to strengthen his power of resisting it. But the presumptuous monarch of France haughtily rejected every attempt to compromise his claims; and Ludovico Sforza, who had staked his fate upon a dangerous alliance, had gone too far to retract. To all the friendly overtures of Ferdinand, to all his representations of the ruinous consequences of suffering a foreign power to enter the peninsula, Ludovico returned only deceitful professions which were merely intended to gain time and to ward off an attack, until he should be supported by the arrival of the French. The Venetians, too, who secretly desired the humiliation of the Neapolitan dynasty, determined with a narrow policy to shelter them-

CHAP. VII. PART II.

selves under a neutrality, and to watch the progress of events. Ferdinand succeeded, however, in winning over Alexander VI. to his alliance by bestowing the hand of his grand-daughter, a natural child of Alfonso, upon one of the pope's sons, and by making other sacrifices to the ambition of the papal family; and he drew his connection still closer with Piero de' Medici. He then resolutely armed to resist his enemies; but he was not destined to encounter the storm which menaced his house, and he suddenly died at the advanced age of seventy years, in the midst of his active and vigorous measures for defence.

His death. 1494

Alfonso II. of Naples,

Ferdinand was succeeded by his eldest son, Alfonso II., who inheriting some portion of his ability, surpassed him, as I have formerly observed, in all the darker qualities of his character, and by his tyrannical and cruel conduct had long rendered himself universally odious. The authority of the new king, however, was recognized by his subjects without opposition; and he immediately confirmed his father's alliances and pursued his warlike preparations. As it was uncertain whether the French would attempt the invasion of Italy by land or sea, Alfonso sent a powerful fleet under his brother, don Frederic, to the coast of Liguria; and at the same time dispatched his youthful son, don Ferdinand, with an army into Romagna to form his junction with the papal and Florentine auxiliaries. Meanwhile Charles VIII. had caused his cousin and presumptive heir, the duke of Orleans, to pass by

pursues his father's measures.

sea with a French squadron to Genoa; where by the aid of his treasures a magnificent naval armament was already in forward preparation, while a body of Swiss troops, which had been levied in French pay in the cantons, joined the Milanese forces in the same city. On the arrival of the fleet of Alfonso off the Ligurian coast, some unimportant hostilities ensued in which the Neapolitans were for the most part unsuccessful. In the mean time, the French troops were pouring into Lombardy from the defiles of the Alps; and still young Ferdinand of Naples was restrained by his counsellors from advancing into the Milanese states to attack them in detail and endeavour to excite a revolt against Ludovico Sforza: until it was learnt, too late, in his camp, that Charles VIII. had himself passed the mountains, and descended into Italy at the head of his army. *

Commencement of hostilities.

Entrance of Charles VIII. into Italy.

* My authorities, for the period between the election of Innocent VIII. and the expedition of Charles VIII., are Macchiavelli, Ist. Fior. b. viii. p. 428. to its close at the death of Lorenzo de' Medici. Scipione Ammirato, Ist. Fior. b. xxv. p. 161, ad fin. xxvi. ad p. 202. Francesco Guicciardini, Hist. d' Italia, b. i. ad p. 41. This celebrated work opens, where that of Macchiavelli closes, with the death of Lorenzo. See also Giannone, Ist. Civ. del Regno di Napoli, b. xxviii. cc. 1, 2, b. xxix. Introduction. Roscoe, Life of Lorenzo, vol. ii. ad p. 340. Sismondi, cc. 89—93. ad p. 132.

Mr. Hallam takes his leave of Italian history, "before as yet the first lances of France gleam along the defiles of the Alps;" but I cannot proceed on my way, without an expression of real regret at the loss of his valuable aid. The limits of his subject engage him in general views rather than in connected narrative; and

CHAP. VII. PART II.

his abridgement of historical transactions is of course necessarily very concise. But I have continually felt my obligations to his lucid arrangement of the great features of Italian history during the middle ages; and I know not whether most to admire his extensive and accurate learning, his enlightened and philosophical spirit, or the poetical beauties and chastened elegance of his style.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM THE INVASION OF CHARLES VIII., TO THE SUBJECTION OF ITALY TO THE EMPEROR CHARLES V. A.D. 1494–1530.

PART I.

Unopposed March of Charles VIII.—The Milanese Crown assumed by Ludovico Sforza on the Death of his Nephew—Entrance of the French Army into Tuscany—Disaffection of the Florentines against Piero de' Medici—His abject Submission to Charles VIII.—Expulsion of the Medici from Florence—The Pisans permitted by Charles VIII. to throw off the Yoke of Florence—Advance of Charles VIII. towards Rome—Terror and Submission of Alexander VI.—Entrance of Charles into Rome—Amount and Composition of his Army—Dismay of Alfonso II. of Naples, at the Approach of the French—His Abdication and Flight—Ferdinand II. King of Naples—His vain Efforts to defend his Throne—He retires to Ischia—Conquest of Naples by Charles VIII.—Imprudent Security of the French Monarch—Alarm of the Italian Powers at his Success—League of Venice against him—Danger of his Situation—He resolves to return to France with a Part of his Army—Narrative of his March—Battle of Fornova—Glorious Victory of Charles VIII. over the Italian League—He concludes Peace with Milan, and re-passes the Alps into France—Ferdinand II. attacks the French troops in Naples, and recovers that

Kingdom—His Death—Frederic, King of Naples—War of Pisa for the Maintenance of her Freedom against Florence—Share of other Powers in the Contest—General Truce in Europe—Singular State of Florence at this Epoch—Rise of the Fanatic Savonarola—He acquires a prodigious Ascendancy over the People—His despotic Authority in the State—Curious Occasion of his Fall—Charles VIII. of France succeeded by Louis XII.—Claims of Louis upon the Crown of Milan, as well as that of Naples—Conquest of the Milanese Duchy by the French—Captivity and End of Ludovico Sforza—Crimes of Pope Alexander VI. and his Son, Cæsar Borgia—Condition of Romagna—Conquest of that Province by Cæsar Borgia—Designs of Louis XII. upon Naples—His treaty with Ferdinand the Catholic for the Partition of that Kingdom—Iniquity of this Alliance—Conquest of Naples by the French and Spaniards—Fate of Frederic of Naples—Extinction of the Aragonese Dynasty of Naples—Quarrel of the French and Spaniards over their Spoil—Battles of Cerignoles and of the Garigliano—Expulsion of the French from Naples—Truce between France and Spain—Establishment of the long Dominion of Spain over Naples—Continued Atrocities and Success of Cæsar Borgia—Death of Alexander VI.—Reverses of Borgia—Pope Julius II.—Fall of Cæsar Borgia—Story of his End—Repose and Servitude of Italy—Julius II. re-establishes the Papal Power in Romagna—Transient War of Maximilian, Emperor-elect, against France and Venice—Continued Struggle of the Pisans against the Florentine Yoke—Their valiant Resistance—Final Subjugation of their City—Review of the Condition and Policy of Venice—Her late War with the Turks—The hatred of numerous Enemies provoked by her continental Aggrandizement—General Coalition in Europe against her—League of Cambray—Presumptuous Confidence of the Republic—Commencement of Hostilities—Battle of Aignadello—Total Defeat of the Venetians—Their continental Provinces rapidly overrun by the Confederates—Abject Despair of the Venetians—The League gradually dissolved by their Submission—Julius II. reconciled with them—Revival of the Fortunes of Venice—

Re-capture of Padua—Fruitless Siege of that City by the Confederates under the Emperor Maximilian—Re-establishment of the Venetian Affairs.

Unopposed march of Charles VIII.

THE entrance of Charles VIII. into Italy might easily have been prevented, notwithstanding the disunion of the peninsula, if the powers who held the passes of the western Alps had steadily resolved to close them against his march. But unhappily for the Italians, both the duchy of Savoy and the marquisate of Montferrat were at this epoch suffering from the disorders of minorities and the weakness of female government. Charles was welcomed into Piedmont with distinguished honors by the princesses who exercised the regencies of these states; and after finding a magnificent reception in his passage through Turin and Casal, he arrived at Pavia, where he was met by Ludovico Sforza, and supplied with the subsidies and resources of Milan. It was in the castle of Pavia, that the ill-fated young duke of Milan was retained with his duchess and children. His health had for some time shewn alarming symptoms of decay; and his perfidious uncle had scarcely accompanied Charles on his continued march as far as Parma, when he was recalled by the intelligence of his death. The mysterious illness of Gian Galeazzo, and his dissolution at a period that accorded so perfectly with the machinations of his uncle, created deep and general suspicion that Ludovico had caused a slow poison to be administered to him. The

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

The Milanese crown assumed by Ludovico Sforza on the death of his nephew.

character of the Moor* but too well justified the belief of his guilt; and partly on the plea that the infancy of Gian Galeazzo's children rendered their succession inadvisable at such a difficult crisis, partly by virtue of an imperial investiture which he had already gained for himself in secret from Maximilian, Ludovico Sforza assumed the ducal crown of Milan.

Entrance of the French army into Tuscany.

Meanwhile Charles VIII., turning aside to the south-west from Parma, had passed into Tuscany through the Appenines, without opposition, by the route of Pontremoli. When the French army here entered the narrow territory between the mountains and the sea, their march through this difficult and barren country might have been arrested at every mile by a far inferior force. But while the whole Neapolitan army under prince Ferdinand was stationed on the eastern side of the Appenines to defend the entrance into Romagna, no effectual steps had been taken by their allies to oppose the invaders in Tuscany. The pope and the Florentines had undertaken to guard the frontiers of that province: but Alexander VI. was sufficiently occupied in the Roman state by an insurrection of the Colonna, the allies of France; and Piero de' Medici, whose incapacity was now signally displayed, had neglected all measures of safety.

* Ludovico had acquired this sirname from his dark complexion, but it agreed equally with the fierce and perfidious qualities of his nature. He was indeed himself pleased with an appellation, that seemed to distinguish him for the wily cunning and duplicity, in which it was his pride to excel.

Disaffection of the Florentines against Piero de' Medici.

As the French approached, the Florentines no longer concealed the indignation which their ruler had already excited by his vain and insolent deportment, so different from the moderation of demeanour which his family had in general cautiously preserved. The people of Florence had always been attached to French alliances; Piero de' Medici had engaged them in a quarrel to which they seemed strangers; and their discontent was openly expressed at his rashness in provoking a danger, which he wanted either the energy or the strength to repel. Amidst his terror at the popular fermentation and the foreign hostility which threatened his power, Piero forgot the difference in situation and character between his father and himself, and resolved to imitate the conduct of Lorenzo, who had averted his destruction by committing himself, in his celebrated mission to Naples, into the hands of an enemy. He hastened to the French camp, and threw himself at the feet of Charles. But his submission was received by the haughty monarch with cold contempt, and accepted only upon the most disgraceful conditions. Though the Florentines had no army in the field, they held the fortresses of Sarzana and Pietra Santa—the keys of the narrow and mountainous district into which the French had entered. For the invaders to reduce these strong places by force would consume precious time, to leave them behind in the hands of enemies would be most dangerous; and Charles insisted that the two fortresses, together with Pisa and

His abject submission to Charles VIII.

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

other minor posts should be instantly surrendered to him. Piero had the weakness to cause a compliance with these demands, and thus sealed his own ruin. Returning immediately afterwards to Florence, he found the whole city roused to fury by his unauthorized and pusillanimous sacrifice of the public honor. He was denied admission into the palace of the signiory; he was incapable of any courageous effort to assert his authority; and after his brother, the cardinal Giovanni, with more spirit had vainly endeavoured to assemble the partizans of his family, by traversing the streets with the once animating cry of Palle! Palle!, the Medici were compelled to retire from Florence. The gates were closed after them, and Piero completed the measure of his imbecility by withdrawing to Venice instead of returning to the French king, who for his own purposes would in all probability have supported his authority against the people.

Expulsion of the Medici from Florence.

On the expulsion of the Medici from Florence, the republican government revived, and the signiory sent ambassadors to Charles VIII., to establish amicable relations with him. The French monarch, who was still advancing, had meanwhile passed through Lucca, where he was received by that republic with submission, and entered Pisa. At the solicitation of the people of that city, he permitted them to throw off the Florentine yoke. The magistrates and soldiery of the sovereign republic were expelled, the Pisans re-established their ancient state, and Charles, leaving a French

The Pisans permitted by Charles VIII. to throw off the yoke of Florence.

garrison in one of the citadels of the place, pursued his route to Florence, and made his triumphal entry into that capital at the head of his troops. The Florentines had hitherto found little reason for satisfaction at the conduct of the king; and though they received him amicably within their walls, he affected at first to treat them as a conquered people. He hesitated whether he should not restore the Medici; he made most extravagant proposals as the price of his friendship; and though the firmness displayed by the signiory in their negociations with him had the effect of moderating his demands, he finally extorted large subsidies in return for the conclusion of the treaty, by which he tacitly acknowledged the independence of the republic. He then hastened his march to the south by Sienna. That turbulent republic, like Lucca, seemed amidst the collision of mightier interests to have shrunken into utter insignificance. Charles took unresisted possession of her fortresses, expelled the civic guard of her magistrates, left a garrison within her walls, and proceeded with his army towards Rome.

Advance of Charles VIII. towards Rome.

Finding his line of defence in Romagna turned by the unopposed march of the French through Tuscany, prince Ferdinand of Naples had now retired with his army upon Rome. The sire d'Aubigny, a prince of the house of Stuart in the service of France, who had been opposed to him with the first troops that had entered Italy and the Milanese forces, at the same time joined Charles VIII. before Florence; and the chieftains

of Romagna began to tender their submission to the French monarch. The approach of the whole invading army towards the ecclesiastical capital threw Alexander VI. into the utmost irresolution and dismay. He at first, in concert with don Ferdinand, thought of defending the immense circuit of Rome; but when Charles VIII. had crossed the Tiber above the city, his courage forsook him. He consented to receive the French army into the capital, and the Neapolitan prince was compelled hastily to evacuate it, and to continue his retreat to his own frontiers.

Terror and submission of Alexander VI.

Entrance of Charles into Rome. Amount and composition of his army.

In making his entrance into Rome, the French king sedulously strove to display the amount and warlike array of his troops; and we possess, in the account of a contemporary, a curious picture of the astonishment and imposing effects, which were produced upon the Italians by the novel equipment and composition of this transalpine host. The enumeration is worth repeating, for it illustrates the progress of the military art, and may serve to explain the nature of some striking changes which warfare was now undergoing. The van-guard of the French army in entering Rome, was formed of Swiss and German infantry, of whom Charles had about eight thousand in his pay. The discomfiture into which the phalanx of Swiss pikemen had more than once thrown the Austrian and Burgundian chivalry, and the experience of the Swiss valour in transient incursions into the Milanese states, had raised the military reputation of the hardy natives of the cantons

throughout Europe, and at length, in the fifteenth century, brought infantry into repute. But it is particularly from the fatal wars of foreigners in Italy, which commenced at the crisis before us, that we may date the revival of the tactical principles of antiquity, the employment of infantry as the true nerve of armies:—a practice which has always since prevailed, and which must continue wherever war rises into a science. The Swiss and German bands of Charles VIII. were ranged into regular battalions; and these were clothed in uniforms of various colours, and marched by beat of drum under their respective standards. They were armed with pikes and halberds, ten feet in length, and among every thousand were mingled an hundred musqueteers. Their leaders were distinguished by the waving plumes of their crested helmets; the front ranks of the soldiery, too, wore casques and cuirasses; but the rest were without defensive armour. After these brave and disciplined bands, marched the Gascon crossbow-men, of whom, and other inferior infantry, there were in all about fourteen thousand. They were followed again by the gens-d'armerie, the gallant chivalry of France, in complete casings of steel, and armed, like the Italian cuirassiers, with the ponderous lance. Of this heavy horse the French army mustered some three thousand; with twice that number of attendant lighter cavalry, equipped with helmet and cuirass, with the demi-lance and the long-bow. A train of artillery, such as had hitherto never been seen, completed

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

this formidable array. The French had already wrought remarkable improvements in their ordnance. Their gun-carriages on two wheels were fastened for travelling to limbers, much in the present form; and their train numbered thirty-four pieces of large brass cannon; besides others of smaller descriptions, the culverins and falconets of the times. Around the king's person, were his household bands: Scottish and native archers, and squadrons of guards splendidly appointed and composed entirely of the flower of the French nobility. Charles was attended by several cardinals at variance with the pope, by the Colonna and a crowd of other Italian captains, and by a brilliant train of the great feudatories of his crown.—It was only three hours after noon when the French army began to file into Rome, and the entrance of different troops continued without intermission until long after night-fall. The torch light which glanced on the arms, and partially developed the dark masses of the soldiery, threw a wild and lurid character over the scene and added to its stern grandeur. *

* Except for the sake of an antithesis, I know not why Robertson (Reign of Charles V. vol. i. p. 131.) rates the total force of Charles VIII. so low as 20,000 men. It is evident from the above enumeration, collated from La Tremouille (Memoires, c. viii.) and from Paolo Giovio (Hist. sui temp. b. ii.) both eye-witnesses, that the organized force alone of the French exceeded 30,000; besides a great number of *valets* or military attendants, who, with the Milanese contingent, swelled the total numbers of the invading army, according to the Florentine history of Nardi, on its passage through Tuscany, to 60,000 men.

It was from the castle of St. Angelo, to which the pope had retired, that he treated with the French king. The conditions of peace were soon adjusted, by which Charles swore to respect the spiritual authority of the pontiff, and to receive him for his ally; and Alexander, on his part, promised, on the demand of the king, to deliver to him fortresses and hostages, as the only sure pledges of his faith. Charles remained nearly a month at Rome, while his troops were forming on the frontiers of Naples to enter that kingdom in two bodies by the Abruzzos and the Terra di Lavoro. In the mean time, at the Neapolitan court, all was confusion and panic. Alfonso II., who, vicious and cruel as he was, had formerly, in the wars of Italy and in that against the Turkish invasion at Otranto, gained a great reputation for courage and military talent, was now completely overcome by his terror of the invaders and the alarms of a guilty conscience. He saw, or fancied, his subjects preparing to satiate upon his person their vengeance for the long train of cruelties of which, during his father's reign, he had been the author or active instrument. By day, the execration of the populace, who rejoiced in the approach of the French as bringing deliverance from his odious sway, resounded under the windows of his palace: by night, in dreams or waking apparitions, the figures of his murdered barons seemed to flit before him, and weighed down his troubled and coward spirit. Thus distracted by apprehensions, and torn by remorse, after shutting himself up in

Dismay of Alfonso II. of Naples, at the approach of the French.

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

His abdication and flight.

one of the fortresses of Naples, he resolved to fly from his kingdom, as if he could escape from himself. On the same day on which Charles VIII. quitted Rome, Alfonso precipitately abdicated in favor of his son Ferdinand; and embarking with his treasures on board his gallies, sailed to Sicily, where his cousin Ferdinand the Catholic gave him an asylum. The short residue of his life was passed among priests in penance and religious observances, and he died before the close of the same year.

Ferdinand II. king of Naples.

The flight of Alfonso II. left his son Ferdinand only the ruins of a throne. The young monarch himself deserved to be popular; and having just before his father's abdication returned to Naples, leaving his army on the frontiers, his presence calmed the public agitation, and he took possession of his crown without opposition. If he had begun to reign earlier, his amiable and courageous qualities might perhaps have fixed the affections of his people and animated their enthusiasm in his cause: but it was now too late. When he hastened to resume the command of his troops in the impregnable position in which he had placed them at San Germano, near the river Garigliano, he found them already conquered by their fears. The French had taken by assault two castles on the frontiers, the walls of which their powerful artillery had laid open in a few hours; and they had put the whole garrisons to the sword. The ferocity with which the French carried on hostilities, so different from their own languid and

His vain effort to defend his throne.

bloodless operations, at first struck inconceivable horror and affright unto the Italians. The Neapolitan soldiery could not be persuaded to face their terrible enemies; and they retired in disorder to Capua on the mere appearance of the French vanguard. Almost all the towns of the kingdom, too, either from terror at the invaders, from ancient attachment to the Angevin pretensions, or from disaffection to the house of Aragon, began to shew symptoms of revolt; and from Capua, where he had laboured to arrest the flight of his army, Ferdinand II. was summoned to Naples to quell an insurrection of the populace. His presence had again an instantaneous effect in appeasing the capital; but the short interval of his forced separation from his army was sufficient to complete the subversion of his throne. The condottieri in his pay, and at their head the marshal Gian Giacomo Trivulzio—who became afterwards so celebrated in the Italian wars, and never sullied his fame by a second treason—treated with Charles VIII., and went over with their bands to his standard.

This shameful defection consummated the triumph of the French monarch. When Ferdinand returned from the capital, he found the few troops who still adhered to him in full retreat, Capua in revolt, the banners of France floating over her walls, and her gates closed against him by the inhabitants. He sorrowfully retraced his route to Naples; but the news of his reverses had arrived before him. The populace of the capital were once

more in commotion; he had reason to apprehend that the mercenaries who still remained in his pay designed to deliver him to the enemy; and perceiving that farther resistance was hopeless, he abandoned the continent, and, embarking with his family, sought refuge in the neighbouring little island of Ischia. The French army were already at the gates of Naples, and, on the following day, Charles VIII. made his proud entry into his new capital. The whole kingdom, with the exception of a few maritime places, submitted with thoughtless joy to his authority; almost all the Neapolitan nobility hastened to tender to him their allegiance; and the terror which had preceded his arms spread even to the opposite shores of the Adriatic. The Turks seeing the standards of France everywhere displayed over the Neapolitan towns, and anticipating the immediate passage of Charles VIII. into Epirus, were stricken with such a panic that they abandoned their fortresses on that coast, as if the dreaded conqueror of Naples had already assailed them with resistless might.

He retires to Ischia.

Conquest of Naples by Charles VIII.

Imprudent security of the French monarch.

After his easy triumph, the reckless and imprudent sovereign of France reposed in his new kingdom, as if no reflection on the inconstancy of fortune could trouble his career of vanity and pleasure.* Not only he, but his whole court and army, abandoned themselves to all the enjoyments

* Guicciardini might have taught him: "tutto il frutto dell' avere vinto consiste nell' usare la vittoria bene,"—that the chief fruit of conquest is the judicious use of victory.

of sense, which a delicious climate, a country overflowing with luxuries, and a voluptuous capital could afford. Charles was completely engrossed in the celebration of festivals and tournaments, and the pursuit of licentious gallantry. No thought was given to the prosecution of the war against the Turks, which had been so ostentatiously announced to Christendom to sanction the expedition into Italy. The security of the real objects of the French invasion was equally neglected. No attempt was made to disturb Ferdinand II. in his retreat at Ischia; all the offices and fiefs of the crown were wrested from the Neapolitans to be bestowed on Frenchmen; and there was scarcely a native nobleman who was not deprived of some dignity or possession, and insulted by the undisguised arrogance of Charles and his courtiers. French officers filled the provinces and oppressed the people in their avidity to amass money; and the rejoicings, with which the Neapolitans had welcomed the advance of the invaders and the overthrow of the Aragonese dynasty, were rapidly converted into detestation of their new masters. But Charles VIII. continued still unsuspicious of an approaching reverse, when he was suddenly roused from his dream of conquest by intelligence from the historian Philip de Comines, his ambassador at Venice, of the formation of a powerful league against him in northern Italy.

Alarm of the Italian powers at his

When their first consternation at the rapid success of the French invasion had somewhat

subsided, the Italian states had full leisure to perceive the bitter fruits of their disunion, in the subjugation which threatened the whole peninsula. No single power of Italy was equal to cope with the French; but it was seen that the expulsion of the invaders, who had been so rashly invited into the country, might easily be effected by a confederacy. The duke Ludovico of Milan, who had himself prepared the storm of French war, had already discovered that he had most to dread from its ravages. The duke of Orleans, who had been left in Lombardy by Charles VIII. in his city of Asti, began openly to assert his pretensions to the Milanese duchy; and while Charles himself shewed a disposition to countenance the personal enemies of Ludovico, he refused him the investiture of a Neapolitan principality which he had promised. The duke therefore earnestly applied himself to engage Venice in a league against the French king.

League of Venice against him.

That republic was already filled with alarm at the aggrandizement of Charles, and sensible of the impolicy of preserving the neutrality which she had originally professed. Maximilian, king of the Romans and emperor-elect, and Ferdinand the Catholic, shared her disquietude. The one, besides an old enmity against the king of France, was stung in his pride and ambition by the fear that Charles VIII. aspired to the imperial dignity: the other trembled for the safety of his kingdom of Sicily from the vicinity of the French, and could not behold with indifference the overthrow

of an Aragonese dynasty, and the expulsion of his cousin Ferdinand of Naples from a throne, which had added lustre and dignity to his own house. Negociations were secretly opened at Venice between the republic and the ambassadors of Maximilian and of Spain and Milan; and a league was solemnly concluded by these four powers. The purposes for which it was formed were declared to be the maintenance of the authority of the Holy See, the protection of the liberties of Italy and of the respective rights of the confederates, and the common defence of Christendom against the Turks. But the publication of these ostensible objects scarcely concealed that the real designs and secret engagements of the league were directed against Charles VIII. The pope himself was at least an accessory to it, and the other powers of Italy were invited to enter it. But the duke of Ferrara professed to maintain a neutrality, and the Florentines, little satisfaction as the conduct of the French monarch had afforded them, remained faithful to their alliance with him.

Danger of his situation.

Notwithstanding the secresy of the Venetian negociations, Philip de Comines,—who has left us so animated a narrative of the reign of Louis XI. and of this expedition of Charles—had already by his vigilance long penetrated the extent of his master's danger, and apprized him of the storm which was gathering. But the presumptuous and improvident monarch was not the better prepared for his defence, and the promulgation of the league of Venice broke over him like a

thunder-stroke. The peril of his situation was great, and promised to become hourly more alarming. A Spanish armament had arrived in Sicily under the famous Gonsalvo da Cordova, whose name itself was already formidable from his exploits in the war of Granada. The Venetians and the duke of Milan were actively hastening their warlike preparations; and while the contemplated junction of the German bands of Maximilian with their forces in Lombardy, threatened to intercept the communications of Charles VIII. with France, the republican fleets menaced the coasts of Naples. In the general discontent of that kingdom, the people began every where to shew their reviving affection for the Aragonese dynasty. Otranto opened her gates to don Frederic, the uncle of Ferdinand II., and, in concert with some Spanish troops who landed from Sicily, that prince shortly gathered considerable strength in Apulia.

He resolves to return to France with a part of his army.

Amidst these increasing difficulties, there appeared to Charles VIII. and his counsellors no prospect of safety but in a return to France; for which indeed his nobility and the whole army, with the restless temper of their nation, had for some time begun to sigh with impatience. But, notwithstanding the immense treasures expended by Charles at Genoa and in France for the equipment of a naval armament, his fleet had so wasted by neglect and the accidents of the ocean, that he had not a sufficient number of vessels left to transport his army by sea. He had therefore no

alternative but to retrace his former route through Italy. Still, unwilling entirely to abandon his easy conquests, he imprudently resolved to leave a force behind him for their defence. He thus uselessly divided and weakened his army, as if a part of it could guard what the whole were too weak to preserve. He named for his viceroy the duke Gilbert de Montpensier, a prince of courage, but of talents very unequal to the importance and difficulties of such a command; and he placed under his orders several of his ablest captains, with a moiety of his gens-d'armerie, three thousand Swiss infantry, and a large body of Gascons. Having made these dispositions, the king, with the remainder of his army, set out for Rome on his homeward route.

Narrative of his march.

Alexander VI. had, almost immediately after the passage of Charles VIII. through the papal states on his advance to Naples, shewn an inclination to violate his treaty with the king. He had refused to put the invaders in possession of Spoleto, one of the promised fortresses; and his son, the cardinal Cæsar Borgia, found means to escape from the French camp, in which he had consented to reside, under the title of papal legate, but in reality as a hostage. Subsequently, Alexander had joined the league of Venice; but he was still averse from openly commencing a war, as long as his states were exposed to the ravages of the French. Charles, on his part, was in no condition to provoke hostilities; and though the pope, rejecting his entreaties to afford him an

amicable conference, retired from Rome at his approach, he passed though the ecclesiastical capital in a peaceful manner, and continued his *march with his army towards Tuscany.*

On his arrival in that province, he did not conduct himself with more prudence than he had hitherto done, and made several unnecessary delays; though Comines, who joined him at Sienna, apprized him that the Venetians and the duke of Milan were rapidly assembling an army of forty thousand men on his route, at the entrance from Tuscany into Lombardy. He consumed several days at Sienna in regulating the troubled state of that city, and weakened himself by leaving a garrison there, which was in a short time expelled in a new commotion. With the same want of judgment, he suffered his march to be arrested by the affairs of Pisa. On the one hand, he was urged by the Florentines to restore that city to them as he had promised; and, on the other, the Pisans shrinking with horror from falling again under the yoke which they had thrown off with his connivance, implored him not to abandon them to their former tyrants. The distress of this unhappy people excited so much sympathy among the French nobles and soldiery, that Charles, assailed by importunities on all sides, wavered and hesitated, and took no other measures than to leave more troops in the Pisan fortresses. Before his final breach of engagement with the Florentines in this respect, his countenance of Piero de' Medici, who was now in his

camp, converted the patience, with which they had hitherto endured his injurious proceedings against them, into violent suspicion and alarm. They vigorously prepared for their defence, and the dangerous spirit which they evinced induced the king to turn aside from their city on his route.

Meanwhile hostilities had already been commenced in Lombardy by the duke of Orleans, who having at Asti received reinforcements from France, surprised the Milanese city of Novara. But he was immediately himself besieged in that fortress by a superior force of the duke of Milan; and Charles VIII. yet lingered idly in Tuscany, until the main army levied by that prince and the Venetians had enjoyed full opportunity to assemble about Parma. Thus, when the French army, now reduced to no more than nine thousand regular troops, and encumbered with a numerous artillery, which was transported with extreme difficulty through the Apennines, had descended from those mountains into Lombardy, they found the confederates of four times their number encamped in the plains below the village of Fornova, under the command of the marquis of Mantua. On the following day the French king, after an ineffectual endeavour to obtain a free passage into his own dominions by negociation, was attacked on his march by the Italian army. The gens-d'armerie of the confederates, led by the marquis of Mantua himself, made a gallant assault; but instead of throwing the whole of their

Battle of Fornova.

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

superior force at once into action, they held back their strong reserves, as usual in the Italian combats. Their light cavalry and infantry, in place of supporting them, fell at the same time to plunder the baggage of the enemy; and the French, who compensated for their vast inferiority in numbers by their superior valour and impetuous tactics, gained a brilliant victory. They lost only two hundred men, but the Italians above three thousand: for the conquerors, who gave no quarter in the pursuit, made dreadful havoc among the fugitive infantry.

Glorious victory of Charles VIII. over the Italian league.

After this shameful defeat, the Italian army, though still very superior in numerical amount, only harassed the Fench rear, and never regained courage to hazard a second general attack; and Charles VIII. continued his march through Lombardy into Piedmont. At Asti and Turin his wearied troops at last found repose, after enduring continued privations and hardships, without abandoning a single piece of artillery. But, in the mean time, the French troops, who were shut up in Novara under the duke of Orleans, were cut off from all communication with their countrymen. While Charles was immersed in pleasures at Turin, the whole confederate army which had been defeated at Fornova, joined the Milanese forces before Novara. Though the duke of Orleans had nearly eight thousand good troops, they were without magazines, and were shortly reduced to the last extremity of want. When Charles was at length awakened to their distress,

it was too late to attempt their relief against the numerous army which, reinforced by many thousand German mercenaries, now surrounded them. The king therefore saw no other resource, than to detach the duke of Milan from the confederacy by the cession of Novara. Upon this condition, Ludovico signed a peace with the French monarch, which the Venetians did not care to oppose. The duke of Orleans and his followers being thus liberated, Charles VIII. finally recrossed the Alps into his own dominions.

He concludes peace with Milan, and re-passes the Alps into France.

While the French king was thus abandoning the peninsula, the situation of the army which he had left at Naples had already become desperate. Ferdinand II., aware of the general discontent of the Neapolitans against their French invaders, had quitted his retreat at Ischia, and seconded by Gonsalvo da Cordova and a body of Spanish gens-d'armerie, landed from Sicily in Calabria, where he soon formed an army; while the Venetian fleet began to attack the French on the coast of the Adriatic, and defection multiplied against them in all quarters. Although, therefore, the sire d'Aubigny inflicted an utter defeat on Ferdinand and Gonsalvo at Seminara, this success could not establish the French affairs. The king, retiring into Sicily, was shortly in a condition to resume the offensive and to appear with a Spanish squadron off Naples itself, close to which,—on the day after that on which the battle of Fornova was fought in upper Italy,—he was encouraged by his partizans to attempt a landing, notwith-

Ferdinand II. attacks the French troops in Naples,

standing the presence of the French viceroy with a small army. Montpensier issued from the walls to oppose him; and the Neapolitans immediately rose in arms, received the squadron of Ferdinand into their port, and welcomed the return of the king with transports of joy.

Montpensier made an obstinate and valiant struggle to maintain himself in the fortresses and in part of the city itself; but being surrounded and straitened for food by the Neapolitans, he was at length compelled, after a siege of three months, to capitulate at the moment when De Precy, one of the French captains, after defeating a detachment of Ferdinand's army, was advancing to his relief. During a suspension of hostilities, the viceroy however violated his faith and escaped from his blockade; and though Ferdinand II. had recovered his capital, the whole French force, co-operating together in the provinces, supported an unequal contest for some time longer. But deserted as they were by their inconstant and selfish monarch, who after his return to France made no serious effort to relieve or reinforce them, they were at once assailed by Ferdinand himself, by the Spaniards under Gonsalvo, and by the Venetian army; the succour of which was afforded to the Neapolitan monarch, in exchange for his subsidies and the pledge of Otranto and other towns. Thus the viceroy, whose army daily wasted by desertion, disease, and the sword, was at last surrounded for the second time, and shut up in his position at Atella in the Basilicate; where the in-

creasing force of the enemy, continued losses, and want of food, reduced the French to despair, and finally obliged Montpensier to sign a convention for his evacution of the kingdom. The French troops were to be transported to their own country; but as some of their garrisons in other quarters still held out, Ferdinand made this a pretext for delaying the execution of the treaty. The troops who had capitulated were detained in an unhealthy situation, where a pestilence, breaking out among them, swept off four thousand out of five with Montpensier himself.

and recovers that kingdom. 1496

Ferdinand II. had enjoyed the recovery of his crown only one short month, when he was suddenly carried to the grave in the flower of his age. As he left no children, his uncle Frederic ascended the throne, and immediately devoted his exertions to cement the public peace and the union of all parties, by his amiable moderation and by his forgiveness of the opponents of his house. Receiving the submission of the few remaining garrisons of the French, he hastened to dispatch the sad wreck of their gallant army to their own shores, and thus was the whole kingdom cleared of its invaders. The captains left by Charles VIII. in Tuscany had, some time before, sold the fortresses which they held to the Pisans, to Genoa, and to Lucca; and altogether the last vestige of the French conquests had now disappeared. Such was the fruitless issue of the rash expedition which, to gratify only his vanity and wanton ambition, Charles VIII. had undertaken

His death.

Frederic, king of Naples.

without reflection and conducted without wisdom; but which yet, by its imposing circumstances and its occurrence at the opening of a new æra in the political constitution of Europe, has given to his character a brilliant though unmerited reputation for energy and heroism.

War of Pisa for the maintenance of her freedom against Florence.

The close of this expedition of the French monarch, destined as it was to plant the seeds of new wars, and revolutions, and calamities for Italy, left at the moment only one open quarrel undecided: the struggle of Pisa for the preservation of her liberties against the iron yoke of Florence. But even the petty war, thus kindled between the two cities, was sufficient to throw all Italy into flames. The duke of Milan and the Venetians took the Pisans under their protection, and sent troops to their support. Maximilian, the emperor-elect, too, was induced to join these powers in an expedition into Tuscany for the same purpose, which he undertook and abandoned alike, after an unsuccessful siege of Leghorn, with the inconstancy and levity that belonged to his character. All this desultory warfare was conducted with the languor of the old Italian tactics, and marked by a total want of interesting circumstances; and the contest still lingered in indecision, when it was at last suspended by an armistice between Charles VIII. and Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. Since the Aragonese dynasty had recovered the throne of Naples, and the troops of Charles VIII. had been expelled from that kingdom, neither the French nor Spanish monarchs had a sufficient

Share of other powers in the contest.

motive for pursuing the hostilities in which they were still engaged on the Pyrennean frontier; and they therefore concluded a truce which, extending to Italy and embracing their allies respectively, gave a brief season of repose to the wearied people of the peninsula.

General truce in Europe. 1497

Singular state of Florence at this epoch.

During the troubles excited in Italy by the expedition of Charles VIII., the internal condition of Florence afforded a singular and striking example of the power of religious enthusiasm. Since the expulsion of Piero de' Medici, the political councils of that republic had been almost wholly swayed by the influence of a fanatic of extraordinary character. This was the famous Girolamo Savonarola, a Dominican friar of noble birth, who, though a native of Ferrara, had established himself at Florence in a convent of his order during the life-time of Lorenzo de' Medici. As a preacher he was then already distinguished by the sanctity of his demeanour, his impassioned eloquence, and his vehement calls to repentance. He declared himself the chosen minister of the Almighty to denounce the wickedness of the age and the scandalous corruptions of the church of Christ, and to foretel the chastisements of the divine wrath. He soon gained a prodigious ascendancy over the minds of his hearers; and he began, even before the death of Lorenzo, to shew that his designs were political as well as religious. During the imprudent administration of Piero his boldness increased; he thundered from the pulpit against temporal usurpation, as well as

Rise of the fanatic Savonarola.

He acquires a prodigious ascendancy over the people.

against ecclesiastical abuses and individual sins; and his addresses to the immense assemblages of his auditors were not more sermons, than violent exhortations to the assertion of democratical rights. The terror excited by his fearful predictions combined with his political harangues to form a numerous party, who were equally distinguished by their devotional austerity and their zeal for liberty; and the spirit with which he animated his disciples contributed not a little to the expulsion of the Medici.

After that event, all the families exiled in the sixty years, during which the dominion of the Medici had lasted, were restored to their rights; and among them the collateral branch of his own house which Piero had driven into banishment. Florence was now divided into three parties; and of these the strongest was that of the *Frateschi* or *Piagnoni*, the monastics or penitents, of which Savonarola was the despotic leader; and it contained not only the majority of the lower people, but a great number of citizens of wealth and family, among whom Francesco Valori and Paol' Antonio Soderini were the most conspicuous. This faction was violently opposed by an association of great families, which acquired the name of the *Compagnacci* or libertines, and desiring to replace the authority of the Medici by an oligarchy, denounced the friar upon all occasions as a false prophet and factious impostor *. The

* It is very difficult to distinguish whether fanaticism or hypocrisy really predominated in the character of Savonarola:

discomfited adherents of the Medici, the *Bigi*, or the grey as they were called from the obscurity in which they were compelled to hold themselves, formed the third and weakest faction. But the partizans of Savonarola bore down all opposition; and I shall not stop to relate the uninteresting changes in the form of administration which left the real guidance of the republic in the hands of the friar.

His despotic authority in the state.

The fanatical madness, with which he filled the great mass of the citizens, had however one singular effect in determining the bias of the republic in political transactions. He had ventured to prophecy that Charles VIII. was destined to be the divine instrument in reforming the church; and to the general confidence in his predictions, is to be attributed the patient continuance of the Florentines in the alliance of that monarch under his injurious treatment of them, and even after they had been compelled to close their gates against him. After the return of Charles into France, a conspiracy, formed by the adherents of the Medici to re-establish the authority of Piero, betrayed the real ambition and lust of worldly power, which lurked under the wild enthusiasm or daring imposture of Savonarola. To secure the execution of the conspirators, who had alarmed the fears of his party, he countenanced the violation of a law

" Car s'il est sûr d'un côté, que les tartuffes les plus scélérats trouvent des apologistes, il est sûr de l'autre que les zelateurs les plus sinceres trouvent des accusateurs." Bayle, Dictionnaire, Savonarola, — a full and interesting article.

which had been previously enacted at his own suggestion. This desertion of his principles, together with the failure of his prophecies on the divine mission of Charles and the miraculous assistance which his arms were to receive, shook the credit of Savonarola; but his ruin was hastened by an opposing spirit of fanaticism, as strange as that which he had himself excited.

Curious occasion of his fall.

In his denunciations of the crimes of the church, Savonarola had not feared to expose the scandalous life of the pope himself. Alexander VI., who trembled at the dangerous example offered by his public reproaches, was rendered his implacable foe. He excommunicated him as a heretic, and allying himself with the enemies of the friar, stirred up the rival monastic order to preach against him. An obstinate contest thus commenced at Florence, into which the Franciscans and Dominicans eagerly entered against each other, as if the honor of their respective rules were staked on the quarrel. To prove the truth of the doctrines of Savonarola, one of his disciples and brethren, a Dominican friar, challenged any individual among his opponents to pass with him through a flaming pile. A Franciscan was found insane enough to submit to the test; and to such a pitch of excitement was all Florence roused in the question, that the fearful contest was made a business of state. The flames were kindled before the signiory and an immense concourse of the people; but when the champions appeared, Savonarola insisted that his brother should bear

the consecrated host with him when he entered the fire. The Franciscans immediately seized the occasion to exclaim in horror against so sacrilegious a proposal; but Savonarola was inflexible, and the day closed while the point was yet in dispute. But the populace were furious with disappointment at the loss of the horrible spectacle which they had anticipated; they revolted at the impious desire of Savonarola to commit their Saviour to the flames; and in that hour the dominion of the friar ended. His enemies availed themselves of the popular ferment to lead the mob to attack the house of Francesco Valori, his chief adherent; and that citizen and his wife were immediately murdered, and their residence consumed to ashes. Savonarola himself, abandoned by the people, was then seized with two friars, his most devoted disciples; and their fate need scarcely be told. The pope was suffered to appoint a commission to try the three for heresy; and his vengeance was glutted by their committal to the flames. The government of Florence then passed into the hands of the political opponents of Savonarola: — the faction of the Compagnacci. *

1498

* The materials for this sketch of the expedition of Charles VIII., and the affairs of Italy in the years which immediately succeeded it, have been sought only in the usual and well known sources: chiefly in Guicciardini, Hist. d' Italia, b. i. p. 41. ad b. iii. p. 189. Paolo Giovio, Hist. sui temporis, b. i. p. 29. to the end of b. iv.; where this valuable work is interrupted by a hiatus of six books, which were lost at the sack of Rome by the duke of Bourbon's army, and have

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

At the expiration of the general truce which had prevailed in Italy, the Florentines, who were obstinately bent on reducing Pisa to her former obedience, eagerly renewed hostilities against that state; and the Pisans continued to defend their new liberty with equal resolution. Both the Venetians and the duke of Milan had assisted them, with the interested view of finally acquiring the sovereignty of their city. But the Pisans reposed confidence in the former alone; and Ludovico, finding his own perfidious designs impracticable, and dreading the success of the Venetians, whose troops were freely admitted into the Pisan fortresses, changed his crooked policy and allied himself with the Florentines. But while the operations of this war were still pursued with indecisive fortune, and had only the effect, by their enormous charges, of exhausting the resources both of Venice and Florence, the attention of Italy was attracted to the progress of far more important events. Charles VIII. of France, dying suddenly of apoplexy, had been succeeded, as he left no children, by his distant cousin, the duke of Orleans. This prince, who ascended the throne under the title of Louis XII., was neither remarkable for ability nor strength of character; but he

Charles VIII. of France, succeeded by Louis XII. 1498

never been recovered. Also, Philippe de Comines, Memoires, b. vii. c. 5. ad b. viii. c. 26. Scipione Ammirato, Ist. Fior. b. xxvi. p. 202. ad b. xxvii. p. 248. Giannone, Ist. Civ. di Napoli, b. xxix. cc. 1, 2. The period before us tediously occupies nearly the whole of Sismondi's twelfth volume.

Claims of Louis upon the crown of Milan, as well as that of Naples.

possessed some fair qualities, and in every way excited more esteem and respect than his predecessor. His claim upon the crown of Milan, as well as that of Naples, rendered him also an object of much more anxious regard and apprehension for the Italians; and he was not slow in evincing his resolution to support his pretensions by arms. By descent from his grand-mother, Valentine Visconti, he maintained his right to the inheritance of her house; and questionable as was his title, it seemed at least superior to that by which the family of Sforza held the Milanese duchy.

The situation of the duke Ludovico of Milan offered facilities for dethroning him, which availed the French king more than all his appeals to the laws of succession. Odious as was the Moor to his subjects by his usurpation, his perfidious character, and the suspicious circumstances of his nephew's death, he had now, in the war of Pisa, rendered Venice his enemy. That ambitious and vindictive republic readily engaged in the views of Louis XII. She hastened to free herself from the burthensome and unprofitable charge of the Pisan war, by referring the settlement of her differences, and those of Pisa, with Florence, to the arbitration of the duke of Ferrara. Though the Pisans indignantly refused to submit to the decision pronounced by that prince that they should be guaranteed in municipal rights under the government of Florence, the Venetians deserted them to their fate to follow their own schemes of

vengeance and aggrandizement. They concluded a treaty with Louis XII., by which they bound themselves, in return for the promised cession of Cremona and a part of the Milanese territory, to co-operate with him in conquering the whole duchy, by an invasion simultaneous with his own. Meanwhile Louis had already secured the aid of the pope, both in obtaining a divorce which he desired, and in his designs upon Italy. He engaged to assist Cæsar Borgia, the pope's son, in spoiling the Romagnol signors and in thus founding a principality for himself; and he bestowed the French title of duke of Valentinois upon that cardinal, who publicly abjured his priestly vows, that he might throw off every shackle which could impede a career of abandoned ambition.

Ludovico the Moor was now about to reap the just fruits of a life of usurpation and perfidy. Assailed by enemies of overwhelming power, he vainly looked around for protection. The monarchs of Germany and Spain had deserted him: the former was now engrossed in a furious war with the Swiss; the latter had just concluded an amicable treaty with Louis XII., without making stipulations in favor of any of the Italian powers. Of these, Florence was in the friendship of France; and though Frederic, king of Naples, whose cause was common with that of Ludovico, promised to afford him assistance, so utterly exhausted was his kingdom that he was absolutely unable thus to provide for his own security. The

only aid obtained by Ludovico Sforza, who though forsaken by all did not abandon himself, was from the enemies of Christendom. He prevailed on the Turkish sultan, who dreaded the coalition of France with Venice, to make a diversion in his favor by attacking that republic; and the Milanese usurper himself assembled two considerable armies for the defence of his states on their eastern and western frontiers. But these measures could not avert his downfall; and all his preparations for resistance had scarcely power to delay the moment of its completion.

Conquest of the Milanese duchy by the French. 1499

The alliances and arrangements of Louis being settled, his forces began to pass the Alps, and assembled in the friendly territory of Piedmont. They consisted of 1600 lances, making with their attendant array 9600 cavalry,—for the full equipment of a lance was now six horses; of 5000 Swiss, 4000 Gascons, and 4000 other French infantry. The king confided the command of this army to the marshal Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, together with the sire d'Aubigny and the count de Ligny; and while the Venetians at the same time made their invasion from the opposite frontier, these leaders entered the Milanese duchy, and completed its conquest in the short space of twenty days. For, when the French army, with their customary vigour and ferocity, had carried the fortress of Annona by assault, and put the garrison to the sword, this execution struck such a terror into the Milanese soldiery, that they dared not shew face to the invaders. Their gene-

ral, from cowardice or treachery, set them the example of flight; the whole army dispersed; all the Milanese towns hastened to offer their submission; and the French entered the capital in triumph. The Milanese people were oppressed with taxes, and disaffected to the usurpation of Ludovico. They everywhere received the French with transports of joy; their duke, perceiving resistance hopeless at the moment, hastily retired through the mountains into Germany with a considerable treasure; and Louis XII. only followed his army into Italy to take formal possession of his new duchy.

Louis had scarcely terminated a residence of a few weeks at Milan, before the people, finding that their condition was not materially improved under the French dominion, passed from the elation of false hope to sudden disappointment and murmurs. Between the alternations of rival despotisms, there can seldom be cause for a lasting preference; and this change in the disposition of the Milanese is less a proof of any inconstancy in themselves than of the inveterate miseries of their lot. On the return of Louis XII. to France, the government of Trivulzio, whom he left as his lieutenant, increased in oppression; and when Ludovico Sforza, who had employed his treasures in levying an army of Burgundian and Swiss mer-

1500

cenaries, re-entered his duchy at their head, he found an universal revolution of popular affection in his favor. He was received with bursts of enthusiasm, and advancing with celerity took pos-

session of Milan; from whence Trivulzio, leaving a garrison in the citadel, was compelled to retire with precipitation to Novara, to await reinforcements from France.

But the final ruin of the Moor was as rapid as his success. The Swiss, formerly so renowned for their pure morals and simple good faith, had been corrupted by their constant employment in these mercenary wars. Rendered insolent by the high reputation of their military prowess, and greedy of gain and utterly debauched by high pay and unbridled licence, they were now capable of sullying their glory by an odious treason. Their bands in the service of Ludovico, finding his treasures exhausted, mutinied, and finished by betraying his person into the hands of the French army. He was sent to France, where he miserably ended his days after ten years of solitary and rigorous imprisonment. He had placed his own children in safety at the court of Maximilian; but the infant son of his deceased nephew Gian Galeazzo, and many of his near relatives were made prisoners as well as himself; and the captivity of almost all the descendants of the great Sforza seemed to confirm Louis XII. in the possession of the ducal throne of Milan.

Captivity and end of Ludovico Sforza.

While great part of Lombardy was thus passing under the dominion of the French king, Cæsar Borgia was successfully engaged in that scheme of ambition in Romagna, which Louis XII. was bound by his engagement with him and with his father, Alexander VI., to support. The design

Crimes of pope Alexander VI. and his son, Cæsar Borgia.

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

was to form a principality for Borgia by the destruction of the Romagnol signors, who, in no more than nominal obedience to the papacy, divided the possession of that province with a few petty civic communities. The object of the papal family was pursued through a course of atrocious perfidy for which language would afford no term; if its developement in the celebrated treatise of a contemporary, had not stamped it in eternal infamy with the name of the writer, who could find nothing to reprehend in Cæsar Borgia. A Macchiavelian policy had doubtless long prevailed in Italy, and was only perfected by Alexander and his apostate son; but, in the various enormity of their private lives, these pests of mankind had seldom, if ever, been equalled. Poison and the dagger were their habitual instruments for the removal of enemies; their public and flagitious debaucheries I shall not describe; on their yet more horrible and secret depravity I dare not dilate. Of one of their execrable passions Lucrezia Borgia, the daughter of Alexander, was the guilty object. Her eldest brother was sacrificed by the hand of Cæsar to the gratification of an incestuous jealousy; and she was at once the paramour of her father and of his surviving son. *

* I address these sheets to the general reader only. But there is extant in the German language a work on the court of Alexander VI., as curious in its details as the jest book of Louis XI., mentioned in the letter to Dr. Dryasdust prefixed to Quentin Durward. See the "Dissertation sur les Libelles Diffamatoires," &c. Bayle, Dictionnaire, vol. iv. pp. 295—7.

Condition of Romagna.

Romagna, in which Cæsar Borgia was to conduct the troubled scene of his ambition, had indeed for ages, with the papal territory in general, been the perpetual theatre of violence and horrors. Amidst the constant desolation of the wars in which its petty princes were engaged, it was impossible for their vassals to pursue the arts of peaceful life. They found no security but in castellated villages; their agriculture was only a hurried labour; and after the harvest which they snatched with difficulty, no traces of cultivation remained. The modern sterility and deadly climate of some of these regions were prepared during ages of ferocity; and this was particularly the case in the Campagna di Roma, which was ravaged by the eternal feuds of the Orsini and Colonna. If a fortalice was surprised or carried by assault, it was burnt to the earth and its inhabitants murdered. Its dependant district was abandoned; the pestilential airs of the desert then spread over it; and their malignant influence forbade the return of population. The people of Romagna were made warlike by the incessant hostilities, and desperately wicked by the evil government and character of their signors. These chieftains, the feudatories of the Holy See, were taught from their boyhood to pursue war as their vocation. They formed their vassals into bands of gens-d'armerie, more or less numerous, at the head of which they alternately carried on their hostilities against each other, or passed as sovereign-condottieri into the service of the richer

powers of the peninsula. The numerous little capitals of their states were carefully fortified; and their palaces were at once embellished by the elegances of literature and art, and defiled with many a deed of gloomy horror. For, of such things was the Italian mind capable, that these princes, the patrons of learned men, of poets, and of sculptors, were yet too frequently monsters of guilt. Their political annals are deeply imbued in perfidy, and blood, and hereditary revenge: the records of their houses are varied only by the assassinations and the incestuous commerce of the nearest relatives.

Conquest of that province by Cæsar Borgia.

When Borgia, with the aid of 1800 French cavalry and 4000 Swiss pikemen detached from the army of Milan, and with some condottieri and their bands in his personal service, began to attack these princes, it was proved by his father's conduct and his own, as the cardinal Albornoz had once proved before, how even the Romagnol treachery, which had been for ages proverbial, could be surpassed by the superior perfidy of churchmen. Borgia first attacked and reduced the city and lordship of Imola. Forli was next assailed, and taken by a furious assault of the Swiss, after an heroic defence by its widowed countess. The ancient houses of the Manfredi and Malatesti at Faenza and at Rimini, and a branch of the Sforza at Pesaro, were destined for the next ruin. The lords of Rimini and Pesaro abandoned their capitals and fled from their states; but Astorre III. de' Manfredi, the youth-

ful signor of Faenza, made a protracted and vigorous resistance; and at length capitulated only upon condition that he should be free to go where he would. But Borgia, detained him in his camp under the friendly pretext of making him his pupil in the military art, and in a few days sent him to Rome. There, after having been the victim of the horrible debauchery either of Alexander or of Borgia himself, the boy-prince was strangled, with his natural brother.

1501

The fall of Faenza completed the conquest of Romagna. Louis XII. had declared that he should regard as a personal injury any opposition to the duke of Valentinois; and, so great was the dread now inspired by the French power, that none of the Italian states had, after this, dared to assist the chieftains of the province. Even Venice had formally withdrawn the protection which she was engaged by treaty to afford to the princes of Rimini and Faenza. Romagna was now therefore erected by Alexander VI. into a papal duchy for his son; and Cæsar Borgia joined this new title to his dukedom of Valentinois. He endeavoured to cement his power by pursuing the exiled families of the deposed chieftains with assassination and poison; but he laboured with skilful and selfish policy to win the affections of his new subjects by the establishment of order and justice. Some rigorous examples were necessary; and he designedly chose for his lieutenant a man of severe and obdurate character, Ramiro d' Orco, who soon converted the long and

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

frightful anarchy of Romagna into a state of regular government. But many were the sanguinary executions before this salutary revolution was achieved; and Borgia, from whose plans it was farthest that the horrible severity of this administration should be attributed to his directions, no sooner found order introduced into his new duchy and cruelty no longer requisite, than he perfidiously ended by directing the execution of d' Orco himself, and exposing his body to glut the vengeance of the people. The peaceful submission of Romagna was, however, far from satisfying the bad ambition of Borgia. He extended his faithless intrigues into Tuscany, and had already begun to trouble the republics of that province, and Florence in particular by declaring himself in arms the protector of the exiled Medici; when he was compelled by his engagements to suspend the prosecution of his own subordinate projects of aggrandizement, to second those of Louis XII., and, with his forces, to attend the army of that monarch in a new expedition for the conquest of Naples.

Designs of Louis XII. upon Naples.

If Louis XII. had been contented with the acquisition and temperate government of Milan, he might perhaps have habituated his new subjects to his authority; and by confirming his influence over the intermediate states of Savoy and Montferrat, might have firmly connected his Italian conquests with his native dominions. But the same ambition which had intoxicated the youthful vanity and inexperience of Charles VIII., seduced

his better judgment and maturer years. From the situation of his affairs, he was certainly better entitled than his predecessor to calculate on a successful issue to his invasion of Naples. His Milanese dominions gave him strong points of support; he was in strict alliance with the pope and with Venice; and, while the other Italian powers trembled before him, his opponent, Frederic king of Naples, without treasures or an army, his fortresses in ruins, his arsenals empty, and his kingdom desolated by the last war, was absolutely destitute of all means of defence. Yet Louis XII. still wavered in indecision: he doubted his power of conquering Naples much less than his strength to preserve the acquisition; for he dreaded the opposition of the sovereigns of Spain, and knew the ease with which they might succour their relative Frederic from Sicily, as they had done Ferdinand II. before. He did not therefore finally undertake his scheme of conquest, until he discovered that Ferdinand the Catholic was restrained by no scruples from sharing the spoil with him. That monarch pretended that Alfonso the Magnanimous had not possessed the right to alienate the kingdom of Naples from the legitimate branch of the Aragonese dynasty; and that therefore he was himself the lawful heir of that monarch to its throne. But as Louis XII. had also rival pretensions through the house of Anjou, Ferdinand proposed to compromise their respective claims by a division of the kingdom.

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

His treaty with Ferdinand the Catholic for the partition of that kingdom.

The French sovereign eagerly closed with the hollow proposal: the capital, the Terra di Lavoro, and the Abruzzos, were assigned to Louis XII. with the usual style of king of Jerusalem and Naples; and Ferdinand the Catholic agreed to content himself with Apulia and Calabria and the title of duke of these two provinces, to be held, like the kingdom, by investiture from the pope.

Iniquity of this alliance.

This treaty of partition, by which in itself Ferdinand the Catholic proposed to spoil his near relative and ally, was attended with circumstances of yet deeper and more atrocious perfidy. It was agreed that, while the French army openly advanced against Naples, the Spanish troops should gain possession of the fortresses of the kingdom, under pretence of co-operating with Frederic to repulse the invaders. Ferdinand the Catholic, professing his usual zeal in the cause of religion, fitted out a strong expedition at Malaga under Gonsalvo da Cordova to attack the Turks; and he caused his general and troops, after a few operations against the infidels, to winter in Sicily without exciting suspicion of his real designs. As the French invasion became certain, Ferdinand, under the guise of protection, offered his cousin this army for his defence, and thus induced his unsuspecting relative to invite his betrayers into his dominions.

Conquest of Naples by the French and Spaniards. 1501

Meanwhile the French army was approaching. It was led by d'Aubigny, and consisted of 6000 cavalry, with 4000 Swiss and 6000 Gascon and

other French infantry. Cæsar Borgia and his contingents swelled this force; and at Genoa—which had followed the fate of the Milanese duchy, and was under French government,—a strong squadron was equipped which co-operated with d'Aubigny and carried 6000 land forces. The Neapolitan king had left nothing neglected to oppose the invaders; but all his exertions could not assemble a sufficient native force to resist them, and his sole hope was reposed on Gonsalvo and his army. This general, who executed his master's projects with a perfidy which well emulated that of the royal hypocrite, dissembled to the last moment, and occupied many of the Neapolitan fortresses with Spanish troops, under pretence of strengthening the positions of his army. But when the French had at length passed the Neapolitan frontiers, he threw off the mask, and avowed his shameless commission, which the pope had already sanctioned, to partition the kingdom with the general of Louis XII.

This accumulation of aggression and treachery, Frederic could not hope to withstand. He was compelled to retire from the frontiers to Naples, whither the French, after being admitted by treachery into Capua, and making a horrible massacre there, rapidly followed him. The unfortunate king had no alternative but to abandon to them his capital and its citadels; and he was permitted by capitulation to retire to Ischia. There, considering a farther struggle utterly hopeless, he

Fate of Frederic of Naples.

in his rash indignation against the perfidy of his relative Ferdinand, made his choice to throw himself upon the generosity of the natural rival of his house. He obtained a safe conduct to proceed to France; where Louis XII., touched with his confidence, assigned him the title of duke of Anjou with a liberal revenue. But it was accompanied by the condition that he should never more quit France, and a guard was placed upon him, at once to watch over his safety and to prevent his escape. His eldest son, whom he had posted at Tarento, soon after surrendered that city to the Spaniards, upon the solemn oath of their general that he should be allowed to retire whither he pleased; but he was, notwithstanding, seized by Gonsalvo and sent a prisoner to Spain, where he survived to the middle of the sixteenth century and died without issue. Frederic himself ended his days in France three years after his retirement; and both his other sons, who had accompanied him to that kingdom, died young without leaving children. Thus terminated the branch of the Aragonese dynasty which had reigned at Naples for sixty-five years.

Extinction of the Aragonese dynasty of Naples.

Quarrel of the French and Spaniards over their spoil.

The object of the iniquitous alliance, between Louis XII. and Ferdinand the Catholic, had no sooner been effected by the submission of the kingdom of Naples to their arms, than the victors quarrelled over the spoil. The division of the conquered country had not been accurately defined by the partition treaty; and instead of

attempting to regulate it by an equitable accommodation, the sovereigns of France and Spain left their generals to decide their differences by arms. Though they were neither of them prepared for war, hostilities commenced between their troops. The French were at first the stronger party; and the duke de Nemours, whom Louis had appointed his viceroy, gained several advantages in the first campaign; while Gonsalvo, who was left by his master without reinforcements, with difficulty maintained himself in a corner of the kingdom. But his brilliant military talents compensated for the want of every other resource; and early in the following year, Ferdinand began to support him with vigour. The superior genius of Gonsalvo then turned the tide of success; and while Ferdinand amused the French king with hollow negociations for peace, and thus prevented him from succouring the duke de Nemours, the incapacity of that commander hastened the ruin of the French affairs. Near the castle of Cerignoles in Apulia the two armies came to a general encounter; and in this decisive battle the French were totally defeated. Nemours himself was killed, and the whole kingdom at once submitted to the conquerors, with the exception of Gaeta and two or three other fortresses, in which the remains of the French army were immediately besieged. Gonsalvo entered Naples in triumph, and the nobles and people with their accustomed facility took the oaths of allegiance to their new sovereign.

1502

1503

Battles of Cerignoles

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

Louis XII., finding himself the dupe of Ferdinand, resolved not to resign so easily the possession of the Neapolitan kingdom; and a new and formidable French army of 10,000 cavalry and 18,000 infantry assembled in Lombardy, and passed into southern Italy. They found Gonsalvo posted to receive them with a much inferior force behind the river Garigliano. But there, amidst a series of harassing operations under the autumnal rains, the disagreements of the French leaders, and the insubordination of their troops, were disadvantageously opposed to the admirable conduct of Gonsalvo and the patient valour of the Spanish infantry, which was now growing deservedly famous. Daily acquiring the superiority, Gonsalvo at last forced the passage of the Garigliano, and inflicted so total a route upon the retreating French, that after the loss of baggage and artillery, the remnant of their army capitulated with permission to retire to France. Piero de' Medici had been a wanderer in the French camp; and in the attempt to escape after this defeat on the Garigliano, he perished miserably in that river by the sinking of his overloaded boat.

and of the Garigliano.—Expulsion of the French from Naples.

On this loss of a second army Louis XII, who already feared for the safety of his Milanese duchy, gave up the war of Naples in despair. Resuming his negociations with the Spanish monarch, he hastened to terminate the contest by a truce for three years; leaving the kingdom of Naples in the hands of the Spaniards, and providing in other

Truce between France and Spain.—

Establishment of the long dominion of Spain over Naples. 1504

respects for the general repose of Italy. Thus was the long dominion of the monarchs of Spain over the Neapolitan states introduced by the conquests of Gonsalvo da Cordova. When that general was first sent into Sicily, in 1495, he was invested, in the usual strain of Spanish hyperbole, with the rank of *Great Captain* of the petty army which he conducted; but this title became lastingly associated with his name in a more honorable sense. The perfidy which disgraced his exploits must for ever destroy our admiration of the man: but to the memory of the soldier it would be unjust to deny, that his heroic courage, his splendid fortunes, and his rare military genius, well merited the homage awarded to him by his own age in the emphatic appellation of the Great Captain. The services which he had performed were too important not to provoke the ingratitude of the suspicious Ferdinand. In visiting his new Italian dominions two years after their conquest, that monarch loaded Gonsalvo, his viceroy, with dignities and honours; but he would no longer leave him to govern at Naples, and he carried the hero with him to Spain, and enviously plunged him into an obscurity in which he closed his days.

Continued atrocities and success of Cæsar Borgia.

While Louis XII. was reaping the just fruits of his unprincipled alliance with Ferdinand, and had discovered too late the imprudence of having himself given the first footing to so crafty and powerful a rival in the kingdom of Naples; all central Italy was successively agitated by the restless ambition of Cæsar Borgia, and the results of his

faithless projects. On his return to Romagna, after the conquest of Naples by the French, he was not satisfied with the quiet possession of that duchy, but meditated the extension of his power over the rest of the papal states: over the March of Ancona, and the provinces immediately surrounding the capital. He had designs upon the states of Urbino and Camerino; and he compassed the seizure of both by treachery and murder. Under pretence of executing a papal sentence against the lord of Camerino, he required the duke of Urbino, as a vassal of the church, to afford him the loan of his troops and artillery; and when that prince had unsuspiciously obeyed, and left himself without the means of resistance, Borgia poured an army into the duchy, and seizing its defenceless places, obliged the duke to fly for his life to the court of Mantua. He then inveigled the signor of Camerino, with two of his sons, to a friendly conference and caused the three to be immediately strangled.

After the success of these flagitious enterprises, Cæsar Borgia, still with the aid of the French, proceeded to weave his toils against the remaining vassals of the church, though they were most of them in his own service as condottieri. But these captains, the Orsini, who held vast fiefs about Rome, the Vitelli, lords of Città di Castello, the Bentivogli of Bologna, and other signors, penetrated his treachery and discovered their danger, in time to withdraw their bands from his service, and to enter into a formidable coalition against

him. They defeated some of his troops, and their measures already threatened his destruction, when he succeeded in lulling them into security by his inaction. No man ever knew how to betray, under the mask of moderation and frankness, so well as Borgia; and, notwithstanding his notorious ill faith, such was his consummate dissimulation that it deceived even these wily Romagnol signors. He confessed that he was indebted to their services for his past successes; he made no secret of his earnest desire to be reconciled with them, and he offered them extremely advantageous terms. By these means he induced them to conclude a peace with him; and even so regained their confidence that they entered again into his service. But meanwhile he had been otherwise secretly augmenting his forces, and preparing his schemes of vengeance; and having lured two of the Orsini, and the signors of Fermo and Castello under his banners at Sinigaglia, he suddenly had them seized. Their troops were simultaneously attacked in their quarters, and the four condottieri themselves were strangled. Alexander VI. at the same time arrested the cardinal Orsini, and caused him to be poisoned in prison; and Borgia, amidst the general horror inspired by his character, then easily possessed himself of the fiefs of the signors whom he had murdered or terrified into flight.

The views of Borgia were not confined to the states of the church, and his machinations and hostile acts in Tuscany had already caused serious alarm to the Florentines in particular. The de-

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

ference of Borgia for the French king, and the alliance between that monarch and the Florentines, had hitherto formed a protection for their republic. But the French affairs were now declining in southern Italy; and as success began to abandon their arms in the war of Naples against the Spaniards, Borgia, of whose policy fidelity to a ruined cause formed no part, assumed an audacious tone with his former allies, and even entered into secret negociations with Gonsalvo and the Spanish court. While Louis XII. was making his last effort to re-establish his power at Naples, Borgia was left free to consummate his schemes of tyranny against the Tuscan states, and even aspired to hold the balance between France and Spain. But in the midst of his daring projects and lofty aspirations, his fall was already at hand. At a supper given by the pope to the cardinal di Corneto with the intention of poisoning that prelate, the wine which contained the fatal mixture was given by mistake to Alexander himself and to his son, as well as to the cardinal. The two latter of the three, after enduring frightful agonies, slowly recovered, by strength of constitution and medical treatment, from the effects of the poison; but the pope himself sank under its violence, and fell, the victim of his own wickedness:—a fitting close for a life of infamy and execrable crimes.

Death of Alexander VI.

Reverses of Borgia.

The death of Alexander VI. proved the ruin of his son. Borgia had calculated and provided against the consequences of such an event to his own power, whenever it should occur; but he

had not anticipated that he should himself be reduced, at the same moment, to the brink of the grave. While he lay dangerously ill, protected by his troops, in the palace of the Vatican, the surviving chieftains of the Orsini appeared in arms in Rome itself and in its provinces. The families of the other signors whom he had latterly deposed or murdered, simultaneously entered into their states and recovered them; and these powers, immediately afterwards uniting their forces to those of the Orsini, attacked and totally routed his army. Borgia, who was still ill, found a refuge in the castle of St. Angelo; but, with this defeat, fell the pride of his blood-stained and detestable ambition. The Venetians, no longer restrained from assailing him by the interference of France, and freed from the pressure of a Turkish war which had lately occupied them, sent their troops into Romagna, and seized many fortresses; other places in the province revolted in favor of the families of their ancient chieftains, whom Borgia had dispossessed; and a new pope finally compelled the fallen tyrant to surrender to him the poor remains of his possessions.

The death of Alexander VI. occurred at the moment when the French army was advancing to Naples through the ecclesiastical states; and the opposite parties in the conclave, dreading the consequences of a protracted interregnum, at so troubled a juncture, and yet equally unwilling to yield to their adversaries, agreed to nominate a pope whose infirmities must insure his speedy

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

dissolution. The object of this choice, Pius III., reigned scarcely a month; and before his death the cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, nephew of Sixtus IV., had time to secure a majority of suffrages in the papal college by allying himself with Cæsar Borgia. The cardinal Giuliano had long lived in exile from Rome at the French court, and in open hostility with Alexander VI. and his son; but Borgia, in the imminent dangers which surrounded him, thought to secure the protection of his ancient foe by rendering him important services. The suffrages of several cardinals who still remained in the interest of Borgia, turned the balance in the conclave, and seated the nephew of Sixtus IV. in the papal chair. The new pope, who assumed the title of Julius II., deluded Borgia by his reputation for sincerity; and that man, who had never kept faith with any one, reposed in strange security upon the promises and gratitude of the violent enemy of his house. He was yet undeceived, when Julius II. suddenly seized his person at Ostia, and detained him a prisoner, until he had purchased his freedom by ordering the delivery of his remaining fortresses to the papal troops. He was then suffered to depart, and repaired to Naples, where Gonsalvo da Cordova had promised him an asylum. But on his arrival there, just before the signature of the three years' truce between France and Spain, Gonsalvo required the pleasure of his master respecting him, and by his command treacherously arrested and sent him a prisoner to Spain.

Pop Julius II.

Fall of Cæsar Borgia.

Story of his end.

Thus was this monster of ferocious perfidy himself at length the victim of wanton ill-faith and cruelty. Ferdinand the Catholic, whom he had never offended, designed him to linger and to find a tomb in his dungeon. But Cæsar Borgia, who had so long troubled Italy, and outraged humanity with his ambition and crimes, found at last a grave, too honorable for a life stained with the commission of every atrocity. He escaped from his prison after a short captivity, and found protection from the king of Navarre, whose sister he had formerly married; and instigating that sovereign to a war with the Spaniards, terminated, as the general of his troops, and on the field of battle, his turbulent and flagitious career.

1507

Repose and servitude of Italy.

In the universal joy of the Italians at the season of repose afforded to them by the truce between the monarchs of France and Spain, they might endeavour to banish every thought of the humiliation which had now overtaken their country. But it was evident that Italy had surrendered herself to receive the law from foreigners: that she was henceforth to bleed, not for her own independence but in their quarrels, and to rest from her struggles, not in the pride of victory and the enjoyment of well-earned rights, but at the pleasure only of her masters and in the shame of servitude. The signature of a treaty of peace at Blois, which followed the truce between Louis XII. and Ferdinand long before its expiration, confirmed the tranquillity of the peninsula. For nearly five years, Italy slumbered on her chains;

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

startled only by the report of perpetual and hollow negociations and dangerous projects among the foreign arbiters of her destiny; and undisturbed, except by some partial hostilities, which I shall notice and dismiss in few words.

Julius II. re-establishes the papal power in Romagna.

The first of these, in point of time, was the re-establishment of the authority of the church over great part of Romagna after the fall of Cæsar Borgia. The new pope, Julius II., over-awed the Venetians by his menaces to cede to him many of the places which they had seized in that province, but others they persisted in retaining; and their obstinacy inflamed Julius with a secret resentment, which was one day destined to burst forth with fearful violence against their republic. After the recovery of minor Romagnol fiefs, several of which he retained under the immediate government of the church, the active and warlike pontiff, who headed his own troops, led them against Bologna, to wrest that city from its signor, Giovanni Bentivoglio, and to reduce it to its ancient dependence upon the papacy. He was completely successful: Bentivoglio was obliged to fly; his capital was taken under the government of the church; and though Julius granted the inhabitants a municipal constitution, Bologna ceased from that period, except for one short interval of commotion, to be numbered among the independent cities of Italy. Perugia was at the same time, on the submission of its signor, placed under papal government with liberal privileges.

1506

1507

The next circumstance that engaged the atten-

tion of Italy was the revolt of Genoa, which had hitherto given obedience to Louis XII., as if that fallen republic had become a component part of his duchy of Milan. But the insurrection of the Genoese, first against their nobles, and afterwards against Louis on his supporting that order, presents no interesting features to detain us in our approach to more important objects. For the French king having assembled an army in his Milanese dominions, and led his troops in person against Genoa, the terrified people, after a few feeble attempts to resist, quickly surrendered at discretion; and Louis punished their rebellion, as he doubtless termed it, with exemplary severity. Neither shall I stop to relate the particulars of a transient war, which Maximilian, king of the Romans, directed against Venice and the Milanese possessions of France. This contest, which was marked only on his part by a few desultory and ill-conducted operations, served again to exhibit to general contempt the insignificant power, the inconstancy of purpose, and the characteristic levity of the emperor-elect. But this war was more important in the passions which it left to rankle, than in its consequences at the moment. Maximilian, who was compelled to leave all his Istrian ports (which Venice had captured) in the hands of that republic, remained deeply humiliated by the disgraceful termination of the enterprises, to which he had been provoked by mere wanton ambition. Louis XII., on his part, professed vio-

Transient war of Maximilian, emperor-elect, against France and Venice. 1508

lent indignation, that Venice would not continue the war to gratify purposes altogether foreign to her quarrel and to her interests. Thus a common exasperation against the republic animated her discomfited enemy and her offended ally.

Continued struggle of the Pisans against the Florentine yoke.

Throughout the repose of Italy, thus chequered only by occasional alarms, the war of Florence and Pisa had still remained an open wound. For above fourteen years, the Pisans had vigorously defended their recovered freedom. Protected and deserted in turn by all the states of the peninsula, and by the more commanding powers of France, Spain, and the empire; their prosperity blasted by a long servitude, their resources exhausted, their territory ravaged, and their city besieged; they had still warded off the yoke, which the stronger republic endeavoured to rivet once more on their necks. The vicissitudes, which their unhappy city suffered in the struggle, were not perhaps marked by any very striking circumstances; —or at least none of her surviving sons had the courage to paint the horrors of her agony and fall, and we know them only in the general relation of her adversaries. We can therefore have no pleasure in imitating the prolixity of the great Florentine historian * on a theme, which might have had greater attractions in the more rude and simple narrative of some Pisan chronicler.

* After experiencing the insufferable tediousness of this part of Guicciardini's work, I can easily understand why, in allusion to his prolixity, "*As long as the Pisan war,*" grew into a proverbial expression at Florence.

Their valiant resistance.

It is, however, evident in the pages of Guicciardini, that the resistance of Pisa was worthy rather of the most brilliant period of her ancient glories, than of her long decay and expiring struggles. When every foreign power had abandoned the Pisans, and the superior forces of the Florentines had entirely blockaded their city and reduced them to the last stages of want, the sovereigns of France and Spain set a price upon their misery. These monarchs refused to permit the Florentines to perfect their conquest, until they had each been paid for their consent, the former 100,000, and the latter 50,000 florins. The Florentines were then suffered to complete the work of subjugation. The Pisans capitulated, and were certainly treated with liberality by the victors; but when their city thus passed again under the dominion of Florence, all the inhabitants who were distinguished by birth, wealth, or courage, disdaining their chains, preferred independence, even in exile, to voluntary submission and servitude. They emigrated in great numbers to Lucca, to Sardinia, and to Sicily; while the bolder spirits among them entered into the French service, and, in the licence of camps and the excitement of glory, found some consolation for the loss of their country and civil rights, and the ruin of their fortunes. *

Final subjugation of their city. 1509

* My principal authorities to this period continue nearly the same as in my last reference. Guicciardini, b. iii. p. 189.—b. viii. p. 438. Scip. Ammirato, b. xxvii. p. 248.—b. xxviii. p. 288. Giannone, b. xxix. cc. 3 and 4.

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

Review of the condition and policy of Venice.

At the moment when the Florentines were left to complete the reduction of Pisa, the principal powers of Italy were engaged in a project of far greater importance and magnitude; and before the surrender of that city, almost the whole force of Europe was already in action, to overwhelm the great maritime republic of the peninsula. Since Italy had become a prey to the invasion of foreigners, the boasted wisdom of Venice had been but poorly manifested. It was little to the credit of her ancient prudence, that she had been blinded to the fatal consequences of suffering strangers to gain the mastery in Lombardy and Naples, and to overshadow the peninsula with their malignant influence. Actuated solely by a narrow and short-sighted policy, she had made no lasting and consistent efforts to preserve the independence of Italy; and she had even been seduced by her grasping desire of continental dominion, to share the spoil with enemies, whom she had herself the greatest reasons to dread. After aiding Louis XII. in his conquest of the Milanese duchy, she was, indeed, for some time deprived of the means of resisting the danger which she had provoked. While that prince and Ferdinand of Spain were completing their iniquitous partition of Naples, and struggling for the possession of their prey, she was assailed by the arms of the Turks, and reduced to confine her attention to the resistance of their dreaded power.

Her late war with the Turks.

The disputed causes of this dangerous war, which broke out in 1499, it is of little moment to

notice. Partly at the instigation of Ludovico Sforza, partly with the restless spirit of conquest which distinguished the Ottoman empire in that age, the sultan Bajazet II. turned his whole power by land and sea against the Venetian possessions in Istria, Dalmatia, and the continent and islands of Greece. The republic was not equal to the successful maintenance of the contest against his gigantic strength; and though the pope, the kings of Spain, France, and Portugal, and the knights of Jerusalem from their stronghold of Rhodes, successively joined their squadrons to her naval armaments against the infidels, these occasional and partial succours failed in giving a favorable turn to the war. Without any decisive event, the republic, in 1503, by the sacrifice of St. Maura and some possessions in the Morea, rejoiced to conclude a peace with the Porte, which was destined to last above thirty years.

The hatred of numerous enemies, provoked by her continental aggrandizement.

The conduct pursued by the Venetians in Italy after this pacification, ripened the general animosity and envy against them, of which the seeds had long been sown by their successful career of continental aggrandizement. By their usurpations in Romagna, they had provoked the hatred of that most haughty and ambitious of pontiffs, Julius II. The issue of the war in which they had engaged with Louis XII. against Maximilian, left both those sovereigns their enemies; and while their retention of the maritime Neapolitan fortresses, which they had received in pledge

from Ferdinand II., gave the king of Spain, as the present possessor of southern Italy, an object to gain by uniting with their other enemies, several of the minor Italian princes had ancient grievances to revenge upon them.

General coalition of Europe against her.

To the various causes of animosity, just or otherwise, which influenced all these powers, is to be attributed their union in the most comprehensive political scheme of ambition and vengeance, which Europe had yet witnessed. Several preparatory negociations were carried on at different periods amongst the pope, and the sovereigns of Germany, France, and Spain; and at length Margaret, duchess dowager of Savoy, daughter of Maximilian and governess of the Low Countries,—a princess in whose character was united all the strength of mind of a man, with the fine tact and dexterity of her sex—and the cardinal of Amboise, minister of Louis XII., met on the part of the emperor-elect and the French king in the city of Cambray, under pretence of regulating some affairs of the duchy of Gueldres. An ambassador of Ferdinand also attended in the same city, but Margaret and the cardinal deliberated in secret without any assistants; and the general league of Europe, to dismember the territories of the most ancient state of the universe, was definitively arranged between a priest and a woman. The celebrated league of Cambray, as regulated by these negociators, provided, besides minor stipulations, that Venice should be compelled, by the combined attack of the confederates,

League of Cambray. 1508

to restore to the pope all the possessions, which she had ever usurped in Romagna: to Maximilian, Padua, Verona, and Vicenza, to which he pretended as imperial fiefs, and Friuli and the Trevisan March, which he claimed as duke of Austria: to Louis XII., Brescia, Bergamo, Cremona, and all the ancient dependencies of the Milanese duchy, which the republic had at different periods conquered from the Visconti: to Ferdinand of Spain, the maritime places which she retained in his kingdom of Naples: and, to the sovereigns of Ferrara and Mantua, whatever had in former times belonged to their houses. In a word, the accomplishment of the objects proposed by the confederacy would have the effect of reducing again the Italian possessions of Venice to her lagunes, and to the narrow strip of the mainland —the Dogado—which bordered on those waters, and had anciently formed the only continental possession of the republic. Almost all the princes of Europe were thus immediately interested in the design to crush the power and humiliate the pride of the arrogant queen of the Adriatic; and that the number of her puissant enemies might be equalled only by the extent of Christian Europe, distant powers, such as England, who had no pretensions to make to her spoils, were yet solicited to swell the confederation.

Presumptuous confidence of the republic.

When the Venetians discovered the existence of the league of Cambray, which was as long as possible cautiously veiled from their penetration, the council of ten manifested a presumption and

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

rash imprudence strangely at variance with the usual character of their government. The pope, of whose ultimate policy the expulsion of every foreign power from Italy was the dearest object, dreaded that the success of the league would augment the influence of strangers over the peninsula. He therefore made overtures to the Venetians for a reconciliation, before he would ratify the treaty; but the council of ten madly refused to detach him from the league by the cession of the disputed Romagnol fiefs,* and the storm then burst upon their heads. The vigour, with which the republic immediately prepared for war, at least gave a consistency to her confidence. Though she failed in an endeavour to seduce Maximilian from the league, and to prevail upon the king of England and the Turkish sultan to make diversions in her favor, she remained unshaken in purpose. Her commercial wealth, which the progress of the Portuguese

* I am surprised that Mr. Roscoe (Life of Leo X., vol. ii. p. 87. 2d Ed.), altogether passing over this preliminary and unsuccessful attempt of Julius II. to induce the Venetians to conclude an amicable arrangement with him, should suppose that it was the pope who originally repulsed their offers. It is evident from the account of their countryman Bembo (Hist. Venet. b. vii. p. 158. &c.), and even from Guicciardini (b. viii. p. 414.), whom Mr. Roscoe himself quotes, that the rejection of the accommodation came originally from the republic. Afterwards indeed, when the pope had given his ratification to the league, and it was too late for him to retract, the Venetians did ineffectually offer that, which they had at first rashly refused: a circumstance, by the way, which seems to have escaped M. Sismondi.

discoveries and trade in the East Indies had not yet had time to undermine, was judiciously employed in levying for her defence one of the most brilliant and numerous armies, which Italy had ever seen; and a formidable naval armament was at the same time fitted out to co-operate with the land forces, wherever it might be possible. But in the midst of these active preparations, the state was troubled by several calamities, which struck terror into the superstitious, as so many omens of the approaching destruction of the republic. The fine arsenal of Venice was nearly consumed by a dreadful conflagration; the fortress of Brescia was fired by a stroke of lightning, and its walls laid open by an explosion which followed; a bark laden with treasure foundered on its passage to Ravenna; and the most precious archives of the state were destroyed by the accidental burning or fall of the building which contained them.

Commencement of hostilities. 1509

The king of France was the foremost of the confederates in attacking the republic; and as soon as his operations commenced, and while the tempest of war was gathering against Venice from all quarters, the pope struck that devoted state with the spiritual weapons of excommunication and interdict. The army which was led by Louis XII. in person, and suffered to pass the Adda without opposition, consisted of 12,000 gens-d'armerie and attendant cavalry, with an array of infantry, Swiss, French, and Italian, which has been variously stated under 20,000

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

men. The principal force of the Venetians was ranged against the French king in the Ghiara d'Adda, with orders to remain on the defensive. The captain general of the republic, Nicolo Orsini, count of Pitigliano, a leader of distinguished reputation, was disposed by his character to follow his instructions and avoid any decisive encounter; but Bartolommeo d'Alviano, the second in command, who did not yield to him in martial fame, was as bold and impetuous, as the other was cautious and deliberate. Near the village of Aignadello, d'Alviano with the rear-guard of the retreating Venetians came in contact with the advance of the French. He at first repulsed their attacks; but in so doing suffered himself to be entangled with the whole invading army, while Pitigliano, with the main body of the Venetians, was still pursuing his march. When a general engagement had thus become inevitable, Pitigliano was too distant, or in the onset neglected, to afford his second in command effectual support; and after an obstinate struggle, in which d'Alviano displayed extraordinary courage, and was wounded and made prisoner, the Venetians were totally routed. Pitigliano escaped with his gensd'armerie, but all his artillery fell into the hands of the conquerors; and such was the ferocity, which had now succeeded in these wars to the bloodless combats of the last century, that above ten thousand men were left dead on the field, of whom by far the greatest number were Italians.

Battle of Aignadello.

Total defeat of the Venetians.

Their continental provinces, rapidly overrun by the confederates.

Louis XII. followed up his success with a rapidity and skill, which did more credit to his military talents than the mere issue of the battle itself. Caravaggio, Bergamo, Brescia, Crema, Cremona, and other towns, immediately opened their gates on his hasty advance; and disaffection to the republic was not wanting to aid him among the nobles of most of these places. Peschiera alone attempted to stand an assault; and the king with an execrable cruelty, from the reproach of which his character had in general been free, caused the brave governor and his son to be hanged from the battlements. At the same time with these operations, the papal troops successfully invaded the Romagnol possessions of Venice; and the duke of Ferrara and the marquis of Mantua from opposite quarters took the field, and seized upon the territories to which they laid claim. The imperialists entered unresisted into Friuli and Istria, and, continuing to advance, received the submission of Verona, Vicenza, and Padua; while the Spaniards laid siege to the Venetian garrisons on the Neapolitan coasts. The wreck of the Venetian army under Pitigliano had meanwhile been reduced by panic and desertion to the most deplorable condition. Flying before the victors, that general was obliged, by the terror of his troops, to abandon the whole Terra Firma, and to seek shelter on the shore of the lagunes at Mestre; and, of all the Venetian dependencies, Treviso alone retained sufficient fidelity and cou-

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

rage to close her gates and defend her walls against the invaders.

Abject despair of the Venetians.

The calamities which followed the fatal battle of Aignadello in such thick succession, had changed the presumption of the Venetians into abject despair. The ancient and vaunted constancy of their senate sank at once into a despondency and terror, as new in the annals of their republic, as the rash imprudence which had preceded these reverses. They vainly endeavoured to propitiate Maximilian, by evacuating the territories which he claimed. They strove to detach the king of Spain from the league, by withdrawing their troops from the maritime fortresses of Calabria. They pursued the same plan in Romagna, by voluntarily surrendering the strong fortress of Ravenna, and all that they still possessed in that province, to Julius II. Formally absolving their continental subjects from their allegiance, they shut themselves up in their capital, and preparing for its defence, thought only of preserving by their maritime forces the existence of their state within the impregnable lagunes. This strange and pusillanimous abandonment of all the objects, for which the republic had, for more than a century, been eagerly contending, was often afterwards regarded,—so easy had it become for the Venetian government to maintain its long established reputation for profound and mysterious policy,—as a stroke of consummate wisdom and foresight. The senate, interested as

that body was in strengthening an illusion so calculated to augment the respect of its subjects and of the world, gladly lent itself to the general belief, and boasted the success of a deep and premeditated scheme. But the circumstances which, at the time, attended the prostration of the republic before her enemies, contradict this assumption, and bore all the marks of an excessive, and assuredly a well founded terror. For, the Venetian army was completely disorganized; all the resources of the state began to fail under a prodigious expenditure; the continental provinces were invaded at every point; and in every city the old factions of the Guelfs and Ghibelins revived with the hope of revolution.

The league gradually dissolved by their submission.

This sudden submission to calamities, which appears to have been prompted only by despair, had certainly, however, all the consequences that could have attended the most admirable policy. The king of Spain, contented with the evacuation of the Neapolitan ports by Venice, had no longer an object in pursuing the ruin of the republic to aggrandize France and the empire. Louis XII., on his part, regarding the war as terminated by his conquests, and impatient to revisit France, disbanded his army and quitted Italy. And while Julius II., by the surrender of the Romagnol places, had acquired the political advantages which he sought, his personal arrogance was flattered by the humiliation and contrition of the republic, who dispatched an embassy of her most distinguished citizens to implore his mercy and

pardon. Having thus succeeded in his primary design of humbling the Venetians, Julius II. began to direct his attention to a plan yet dearer to his imagination, and more worthy of his enterprising genius: the expulsion of every foreign power from the peninsula. Secretly animated by this purpose, he would no longer refuse to accept the submission of the Venetians; and he began to shew a favor towards them, which in a few months terminated in a complete reconciliation.

Julius II. reconciled with them

Revival of the fortune of Venice.

Meanwhile the first gleam of success dawned upon the Venetians. In the insolence of the French and the brutality of the German soldiery, the inhabitants of the conquered provinces had soon cause to contrast their state under the Venetians, with what it had become under foreigners; and to deplore the change. The French army was disbanded, the Spanish and papal powers had silently withdrawn from the contest; and a ray of hope broke in upon the counsels of the Venetians, when the senate perceived that the distrust, or coldness, or alienation of the allies, had left Maximilian single-handed to contend with them. The wonted courage, the energy, and the wisdom of the government at once revived; they strained every nerve, and spared no pecuniary sacrifices, to recruit and re-organize their army; and they had already prepared to act offensively, when, by the aid of the people of Padua, that city was surprised by a body of their troops, and the German garrison compelled to fly. From the day on which this important place was recovered, may be dated

Re-capture of Padua.

the revival of the republic; and it was long commemorated accordingly at Venice. The Venetian army immediately advanced; the territory of Padua followed the fate of the city; and these successes were strengthened by the surprise and capture of the marquis of Mantua, who had imprudently exposed himself with a small force on the Veronese frontiers.

Fruitless siege of that city by the confederates under the emperor Maximilian.

Maximilian had hitherto himself made few efforts, and profited only by the exertions of his allies; but the loss of Padua stung him with shame and fear at the consequences of his own negligence. He hastened the tardy assembly of his army; and being joined by a body of French gens-d'armerie, and numerous auxiliaries of the different members of the league, he laid siege to Padua, with an army of near forty thousand men of various nations, and an immense train of two hundred pieces of cannon. The Venetians had thrown their whole army into Padua to defend the immense circuit of its walls; they had sedulously improved and augmented its fortifications; and the young nobles of Venice were suffered to vie with each other in repairing to the scene of danger, to share in the peril and glory of the defence. The artillery of the besiegers effected several breaches in the works; and Maximilian made repeated efforts to carry the place by a general assault. To stimulate the rival courage of his German, and French, and Spanish troops, the emperor assigned different points of attack to each nation; but the obstinate resolution of the

CHAP. VIII. PART I.

defenders prevailed over all these attempts; and Maximilian was finally compelled to raise the siege, to dismiss his auxiliaries, and to retire into Germany, with signal loss of military reputation.

Re-establishment of the Venetian affairs.

The issue of this expedition of Maximilian confirmed the re-establishment of the Venetian affairs. The republic, pursuing her offensive operations, rapidly recovered a considerable part of her Lombard territory. She was now even sufficiently strong to attempt vengeance against the duke of Ferrara, by invading his states and penetrating to his capital; and though her forces sustained a severe defeat in this enterprise, the duke, at the end of the eventful campaign which had threatened the annihilation of Venice, was but too happy to screen himself from farther assaults by the mediation of the pope. I need not describe

1510

the indecisive operations of the following year, in which the exertions of the Venetian arms still balanced the event against the united forces of the French and imperialists; but the designs of Julius II. now gave a new character to the political and military relations of the peninsula. *

* Guicciardini, bb. viii. p. 412.—ix. p. 481. Petri Bembi, Histor. Venet. bb. vii. p. 153. —x. p. 231.

PART II.

Resolution of Julius II. to expel the French from Italy—First Hostilities—Abortive Council of Pisa, summoned by Louis XII. and the Emperor against the Pope—The Holy League formed by Julius II. against the French—Distress of Louis XII.—General War in Italy—Exploits of Gaston de Foix—Sanguinary Battle of Ravenna—Victory of the French—Death of Gaston de Foix—The Fortune of the French in Italy perishes with him—Their Expulsion from the Peninsula—The Freedom of Genoa restored—Maximilian Sforza placed on the Throne of Milan—Disunion of the Powers of the Holy League—Death of Julius II.—Pope Leo X.—Retrospect of Florentine Affairs since the Expulsion of the Medici—Restoration of that Family—Servitude of the State—Affairs of Italy during the Pontificate of Leo X.—Last Enterprise of Louis XII. of France—His Reconciliation with the Papacy, and Death—The Accession of Francis I. to the French Crown, introduces a Period of more comprehensive Policy and Warfare in Europe—Impossibility of tracing its Vicissitudes with Minuteness in this Work—General Sketch of its Events—Conquest of the Milanese Duchy by Francis I.—Deposition of Maximilian Sforza—Death of Ferdinand the Catholic.—Succession of his Grandson Charles to the Spanish Dominions—General Peace in Italy—Competition of Charles of Spain and Francis I. for the Imperial Crown—Alliance of the Pope and the Emperor Charles V. against Francis I.—Conquest of the Milanese Duchy by the Confederates—Death of Leo X.—Continued and unsuccessful Enterprises of Francis I. in Italy—Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan—Pope Adrian VI.—Pope Clement VII.—Disastrous Consequences of the Battle of Pavia to Italy—Charles V. all-powerful in the Peninsula—Attempt of the Italian Powers to resist his Yoke—Treachery of the Marquis of Pescara—General League

of Italy for the Recovery of Independence—Its impotent Results —Fatal Misconduct and Vacillation of Clement VII.—Sack of Rome by the Imperialists—Condition of Genoa—Fortunes and Character of Andrea Doria—He restores the Republic, under the Protection of Charles V.—His magnanimous Patriotism— Desertion of the Italian League by Clement VII. and Francis I.; by the Treaty of Barcelona, and Peace of Cambray—Final Subjection of Italy to the Emperor Charles V.—LAST STRUGGLE OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC—*The Medici—Their second Expulsion from Florence—Renewal of the Republican Constitution—Resolution of the Florentines to maintain their Liberties against the Emperor and the Medici—Their gallant and protracted Defence—Fall of Florence—Alessandro de' Medici, first Duke of Florence—Extinction of the Republic.*

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

Resolution of Julius II. to expel the French from Italy.

1510

IN the resolution, which Julius II. had formed, to clear Italy of her foreign masters, that enterprising pontiff determined that the storm should first fall upon the French. With the violence which distinguished his character, he had conceived a personal animosity against Louis XII., which was aggravated by several trivial disagreements; and he eagerly sought an occasion for a rupture with him. The constancy with which Alfonso, duke of Ferrara, adhered to the French alliance, diverted a portion of his indignation against that prince; and upon some pretexts of the disobedience of Alfonso to the Holy See, he thundered an excommunication against him, and against all who should protect him. At the same time that the papal troops invaded the state of Ferrara, the pope stirred up enemies in all quarters against the king of France; and Louis XII., notwithstanding the superstitious scruples which sensibly affected

him, at engaging in hostilities against the supreme head of the church, found himself reduced in his own defence to repel the aggressions of the restless pontiff, and to protect his faithful confederate. His troops were soon called upon to combat the warlike pope in person; for Julius, now exciting the Venetians to attack the prince whom he had before protected, induced them to enter the Ferrarese territory in concert with the papal forces, and himself directed the operations of the combined army. At the siege of Mirandola, the pope, in the depth of winter, visited the trenches and urged the fire of the batteries; and not contented with shocking all religious minds by this scandalous spectacle, his impatience to take possession of the place as a conqueror was so great, that, on its capitulation, he entered the fortress by the breach, in preference to waiting until the gates could be unclosed, and the intrenchments which defended them levelled for his passage. This success was soon more than counterbalanced. The old marshal Trivulzio being now placed by Louis XII. at the head of the French army in Italy, rapidly advanced with a strong force towards Bologna, where the pope was then residing. Julius was compelled to fly for safety to Ravenna and from thence to Rome; Bologna was captured by the French; and the papal army was totally routed in its neighbourhood.

First hostilities.

1511

If Louis XII. had suffered his general to use his advantage, he might have dictated peace to

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

Julius II. under the walls of Rome. But in the midst of his successes, the pious monarch, at the reflection that he was combating the church, was troubled with continual horror and remorse. He forbade Trivulzio from following up his victory; he ordered him to withdraw his troops into the Milanese territory; and he declared that, though he was conscious of having committed no fault, he was ready to humble himself before the pope, and to demand pardon of his holiness, so that he might but obtain peace. But finding all his pacific overtures lost upon the inflexible Julius, he at last, in concert with the emperor-elect, ventured upon a measure, which had long occupied their deliberations. This was to assemble a general council of the church, and to summon the pope before it, by their own authority and that of a few disaffected cardinals, who had seceded from the court of Julius II. By this expedient, Louis strove to quiet his own vain scruples of conscience, and to destroy the formidable power of his enemy, by depriving him of his sacred character. But the attempt failed miserably. The mockery of a council, which was convened to meet at Pisa, was supported only by the presence of the French and imperial commissioners, of four rebellious cardinals, and of a few other prelates; and Louis XII. himself, instead of supporting his own work with vigour, betrayed his irresolution and weakness by his eagerness still to negociate with the pontiff. Julius well knew his superstitious timidity, and availed himself of it. He summoned a council to

Abortive council of Pisa, summoned by Louis XII. and the emperor against the pope.

meet by his legitimate authority at the Lateran; he laid all places which should give shelter to the schismatic council, and all princes who should support the assembly, under a general interdict and excommunication; and he finally succeeded in giving a consolidation and consistency to his plans, by the formation of a regular league against the French.

Hitherto Ferdinand the Catholic had of late been occupied in the prosecution of some conquests against the Moors in Africa; but his attention was now recalled to the affairs of Italy. A rupture with France suited his views in other quarters, and after addressing remonstrances to Louis XII. with his usual hypocrisy against the sin of combating the ecclesiastical chief of Christendom, he thought himself at liberty to enter into a hostile confederacy against his ancient ally. A treaty was signed at Rome between the pope, the king of Spain, and the Venetians, under the prostituted title of the holy league. Its objects were declared to be, the maintenance of union in the church, which was menaced with a division by the schismatic council of Pisa; the recovery of Bologna and other ecclesiastical fiefs—meaning those of the duke of Ferrara—for the papacy; and the expulsion from Italy of all who should oppose these designs:—that is to say, of the king of France.

The holy league formed by Julius II. against the French.

At the same time, the pope endeavoured to raise other enemies against Louis XII. His hopes were directed both towards England and Switzer-

land. Over the vain pride and inexperience of the English king, his influence and that of Ferdinand prevailed; and Henry VIII., joining the league, created by his arms in France a powerful diversion in its favor. With the Swiss, Louis XII. had imprudently embroiled himself; and the pope, on the other hand, acquired so great an influence over those devout republicans, that after having already induced them to make one desultory invasion of the Milanese duchy, he now engaged them in a second. This expedition, although undertaken with formidable numbers, terminated, it is true, like the first. After penetrating to the gates of Milan, the Swiss suddenly withdrew to their mountains, either moved by caprice, or the difficulties of their enterprise, or, as is most probable, bribed by the French: for the venality and treachery of their mercenary bands had now exceeded all shame, and their only object in war was to extort money alike from their employers and their enemies. Notwithstanding the abortive issue of their descent into the Milanese duchy, the ancient terror of their arms had contributed to increase the distresses which surrounded the French.

Distress of Louis XII.

Louis XII., oppressed by so many enemies, was left without one efficient ally. While the other great powers of Europe were arrayed against him, the emperor-elect was only in name his confederate: Maximilian, indeed, desired the continuance of the war, but he was in no way disposed to share its burthens. In Italy the duke of Ferrara, who alone remained faithful to France, was

himself rather in need of protection, than capable of affording assistance. All the other states of the peninsula, who were not actively engaged in the holy league,—the marquis of Mantua, and the Tuscan republics of Florence, Sienna, and Lucca, —endeavoured to secure their safety by a policy suited to their weakness. They observed a cautious and silent neutrality, as if they were desirous of burying their very existence in obscurity.

When Julius II. found himself supported by the puissant league which he had formed, he pursued the refractory cardinals, and the council of Pisa and its adherents, with unqualified violence. As the thunders of the Vatican fell upon the schismatic assembly, the Italian clergy generally hastened to disclaim all connection with its proceedings; and the cardinals who were to open its session, publicly reviled by the Pisan mob, and with difficulty protected by a French escort, were compelled to fly from the city, and to seek refuge at Milan, where the popular contempt still awaited them. But the contest between the French king and the holy league, remained to be decided by other arms than the bulls and excommunications of the pope. It was late in the year before hostilities commenced by the advance into Romagna of the papal and Spanish armies, under the command of the viceroy of Naples, don Raymond de Cardona; while the Venetian forces began to act vigorously in eastern Lombardy. But the superior strength of the league was more than counterbalanced by the extraordinary abilities of the

General war in Italy.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

young hero, who now began to appear at the head of the French armies. This was the famous Gaston de Foix, duke of Nemours, and nephew of Louis XII., who after having already, at the early age of twenty-two years, given brilliant indications of courage and military talents, was at this juncture entrusted with the supreme command of his countrymen in Italy, and won by his splendid achievements in a few short months an immortality of martial glory.

Exploits of Gaston de Foix.

Gaston de Foix commenced his quick series of triumphs by leading his army from the Ferrarese duchy to the relief of Bologna, to which the confederates under don Raymond de Cardona had laid siege in the beginning of the new year. The allies, to avoid an engagement upon unfavorable terms, were compelled to retreat before him; but the intelligence, that the Venetians from another quarter had entered the city of Brescia by surprise, and were pressing the siege of its citadel, summoned him into eastern Lombardy. He flew with incredible celerity to repel this new danger. Violating the neutral territory of Mantua to gain the direct line to Brescia, he traversed it with his gens-d'armerie so rapidly, that he marched fifty Italian miles in one day. He fell upon the Venetians, and cut to pieces two large bodies of their forces on his route; and reaching Brescia in time to save its citadel, he inflicted a total defeat upon the republican army in the streets of the city itself. The battle was obstinate and the carnage terrific; the citizens valiantly supported the

1512

Venetians; and eight thousand persons had perished in an indiscriminate massacre before their resistance ceased. For several days, Brescia was given over to all the horrors which could follow an assault; and Gaston de Foix stained his victory alike by the atrocities which he permitted, and by the subsequent execution of a Brescian noble and his sons, who had supported the Venetian cause.

Sanguinary Battle of Ravenna.

The victory of the young Nemours restored the ascendancy of the French affairs in eastern Lombardy; and having received reinforcements from France, he marched again by command of his sovereign into Romagna, for the purpose of obliging the pope by a decisive battle to listen to terms of accommodation. Under the walls of Ravenna, the contending armies closed in the most obstinate and sanguinary encounter of the age. Gaston de Foix had under his orders a numerous gens-d'armerie, 5000 landsknechts or German foot, 5000 Gascon, and 8000 other French and Italian infantry, besides the contingent and the fine artillery of the duke of Ferrara. * The papal and Spanish forces under don Raymond de

* The taste of Alfonso of Este, the reigning duke of Ferrara, for the mechanical arts, had induced him to apply his attention to the foundery of cannon, and he possessed the finest artillery of the times.

Ariosto has celebrated the exploits of Alfonso in this battle and described the encounter, particularly in his fourteenth canto; and he of course attributes the event of the day (Orland. Fur. cant. iii. stanza 55.) principally to the valour and military skill of his patron; who indeed really appears to have rendered good service to the French.

Cardona numbered rather a larger force of cavalry; their infantry were only 10,000, but of these 7000 were the famous Spanish bands under Pietro Navarro, and the remainder Italians. The viceroy of Naples had orders to avoid a battle; but Nemours, by besieging Ravenna, drew him to intrench his army in the vicinity of that place for its protection, and then boldly attacked him. After a murderous cannonade on both sides, in which the assailants at first suffered most, the gens-d'armerie of the confederates, who were not covered, like the infantry, by their intrenchments, were at length so galled in flank by the artillery of the duke of Ferrara, that they impatiently sallied from their lines. The Spanish infantry followed to their support, and the battle became general throughout the field. After a long and furious struggle, the brilliant gens-d'armerie of France overpowered the cavalry of the allies, and compelling them to seek safety in flight, fell upon the Spanish foot. Those gallant bands had already inflicted dreadful havoc among the German landsknechts, as immovable but not so dextrous in the management of arms as themselves; and now, pressed and assailed on all sides, they yet maintained their array, and slowly retired, still repulsing their enemies, until they were suffered to continue their retreat unmolested. Of the two small armies, ten thousand men, at the very lowest computation, lay dead on the field; of whom two-thirds were of the allies. The day was decidedly with the French; the baggage,

Victory of the French.

the artillery, and many standards of the confederates, remained in their hands; together with the papal legate, the cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, and all the leaders of the defeated army, except the viceroy, who fled too soon for his fame. But the French had sustained an irreparable loss. Their youthful hero, Gaston de Foix, fell in the arms of victory, in a last charge against the Spanish bands. So dazzling had been his brief career, that he can scarcely be said to have died prematurely: he had sullied his exploits by a ferocity which even surpassed the usual reproach of the age; but if, in admiration of his transcendant talents, we could forget—what never should be forgotten—their misapplication to the misery and destruction of his species, he might be pronounced to have already attained the summit of human glory.

Death of Gaston de Foix.

If Gaston de Foix had survived his victory at Ravenna still to animate the enthusiasm of his followers, there was nothing to oppose his march to Rome and to Naples, or to prevent him from giving law to the pope in one capital, and reestablishing the authority of his sovereign in the other. But with the invincible young hero, perished the fortunes of the French in Italy. Notwithstanding the consternation, with which the battle of Ravenna filled the powers of the holy league, and the immediate submission of great part of Romagna to the conquerors, the victory of the French proved more fatal to themselves than to their enemies. Besides the duke of Ne-

The fortune of the French in Italy perishes with him.

mours, they had lost all their favorite captains and the flower of their soldiery. The sieur de La Palisse, who succeeded De Foix in the command, could neither inspire the remnant of his army with the same confidence, nor repress the disorders, and weariness, and disgust, which now reigned in their camp. To aggravate the losses of the battle, Louis XII. was not only unable to send reinforcements into Italy, but compelled, by his war with England and with Ferdinand on the Pyrennean frontiers, to recall part of his forces into France.

Under these circumstances, Julius II. was the first of the confederates to recover from his alarm, and to resume his wonted activity and spirit. He hastened another expedition of the Swiss into the Milanese duchy, which he had already projected; he induced the emperor-elect to confirm a truce with the Venetians, to which he had bribed his avarice or necessities; and it soon became evident that the battle of Ravenna had prepared the way for the total expulsion of the French from the peninsula. La Palisse, on the rumoured approach of the Swiss, was obliged to evacuate Romagna, and to retire into the Milanese duchy to provide for its defence. The Spanish and papal forces therefore again advanced into Romagna, and recovered many places; the Swiss descended from their mountains to the formidable number of 20,000 foot, and joined the Venetian army; and at this critical juncture, the artful negociations of Ferdinand of Spain induced the

emperor-elect to enter the holy league, and to co-operate in raising to the ducal throne of Milan his name-sake, Maximilian Sforza, son of Ludovico the Moor and cousin of his empress, who had long resided at his court. The French were utterly unable to resist the accumulation of hostility, which now overwhelmed their weakened and disorganized forces. They were driven through the Milanese duchy, as the Swiss and Venetians advanced, without even the power to offer a battle. Their retreat was harassed by the inhabitants, who took a fearful vengeance upon their detachments and stragglers for their past tyranny; and they did not consider themselves in safety until they had reached the confines of France. The surrender of Bologna and the few other garrisons which the retreating army had left in Lombardy, alone remained to complete the expulsion of the French from Italy.

Their expulsion from the peninsula.

This catastrophe of course produced an immediate change in the aspect of the peninsula. The pope at once recovered Bologna and other cities and territories in Romagna; and the duke of Ferrara was compelled to repair to Rome and to submit to his mercy. By his good offices, Julius gave liberty to his native city, Genoa, where one of the Fregosi, amidst the acclamations of the people, was proclaimed doge of the reviving republic. Maximilian Sforza was introduced with great solemnity into Milan, and took possession of that duchy; and these arrangements might appear to offer an earnest of future tranquillity,

The freedom of Genoa restored.

Maximilian Sforza placed on the throne of Milan.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

since they were the work of a general alliance of *the church and the empire*, the Swiss and the Italian powers. But the holy league experienced the fate of all such confederacies. Its members agreed no longer, when their common object had been accomplished. The pope, the great mover of the league, was the first to impair its work. He dismembered Parma and Placentia from the Milanese duchy, under pretence that they were ancient fiefs of the church; he was bent upon stripping the house of Este of the duchy of Ferrara; and Alfonso with difficulty escaped from detention at Rome to put himself upon the defensive. At the same time the hostility which Julius evinced towards the Spaniards, betrayed that the completion of his projects aimed at the expulsion of all foreign powers from Italy. It was on the Swiss, on whom he had bestowed the title of defenders of the church, and who, in giving Maximilian Sforza possession of the Milanese duchy, had exacted enormous contributions for their services, that he principally relied for assistance. The young duke of Milan had already subjects of complaint against the pontiff; and the rival pretensions of the emperor and the Venetians in Lombardy, threatened new disturbances. Thus the powers of the league were all distracted by various and opposite interests; nor was Louis XII. himself disposed to renounce, without farther efforts, the possession of his Milanese dominions. Amidst the numerous and contradictory negociations with which all Europe was filled by

Disunion of the powers of the holy league.

the rapid dissolution of the holy league, Julius II. was, notwithstanding his advanced age, still the great agitator. But his own days were fast ebbing to their close; and, after a short illness, death overtook him in the vigour of his active intellect, while he was yet eagerly occupied in his great object of clearing the peninsula of the influence of foreign princes: or, as he was accustomed to term it, of driving the barbarians out of Italy.*

Death of Julius II.

Pope Leo X.

The incessant troubles created by the turbulent ambition, the violence, and the warlike temper of Julius II., rendered the wish general in the Roman conclave, that his successor should resemble him as little as possible. This desire produced the election of the cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, the second son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who was already known by that love of letters, which has often since obtained for his memory, under his pontifical title of Leo X., an exaggerated reputation. This celebrated pontiff, in whose person the Medici thus attained the supreme dignity in the church, had already contributed by his address to the revival of the fortunes of his family; and their restoration to sovereign power at Florence, which had almost immediately preceded the death of Julius II., was in a great measure prepared by his prudence and conciliation.

* Guicciardini, b. ix. p. 482—b. x. p. 30. Petri Bembi, Hist. Venet. b. x. p. 232—b. xii. p. 286: that is, to the end, for the Venetian history of Bembo terminates with the death of Julius II.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

Retrospect of Florentine affairs since the expulsion of the Medici.

Since the war of Pisa, Florence had sunk into a repose which had more of exhaustion than of real security or strength. Evidently attached to the French cause, yet fearful of openly and vigorously assisting it, the republic, from the timidity of her rulers, had fallen into insignificance and obscurity. But as her inclinations were known, she had only neglected to support her ally, Louis XII., without being able to propitiate his enemies. Since the first entrance of the French into Italy, the mightier combatants who crowded the political stage might naturally displace powers of inferior physical strength from the station which they had previously occupied; and the unwarlike and commercial republic of Florence would necessarily, perhaps, sink into a state of the second order. In contrasting the glorious influence which Florence had maintained over Italy in earlier times, with her nullity at the epoch before us, we should doubtless err in attributing the disgraceful change, as some writers have done, exclusively to the effects of her long submission to the Medici, rather than to the great revolution which had already taken place in the aspect of Europe. But there can, I think, be little doubt that the protracted dictatorship of that family had completely ruined the springs of republican energy; and that in its consequences, even when the yoke was shaken off, it was proved to have extinguished the passive courage and the energy which had once animated all classes of citizens in the main-

tenance of the freedom and political station of their commonwealth. If the party of the Albizzi had continued to guide the counsels of the republic, they might not have been able altogether to avert the fate of Italy, or the decline of Florentine power. But under their vigorous administration, the political importance of the republic would never have dwindled into contempt; or, if to fall was inevitable, she would have fallen gloriously in the struggle for Italian independence.

On the expulsion of the Medici, the Florentines had rejected alike their ancient mode of appointing magistrates by lottery, and an attempt made by the aristocratical party, through the agency of a balia, to commit the election of the signiory to an oligarchy of twenty *accoppiatori* or commissioners. The triumph of the democratical faction under Savonarola had been followed by the establishment of a general sovereign council; in which every individual, who could prove that his family had for three generations enjoyed the rights of citizenship, was entitled to a seat. To this body, which was composed of about eighteen hundred citizens, was confided the election of the magistracy. The signiory was still changed every two months; until, after the death of Savonarola, and amidst the troubles of Italy, it was found or imagined that this perpetual rotation of administration gave a dangerous instability to the government of the republic. In 1502, therefore, a gonfalonier or president of the state was chosen for life with limited powers.

The person selected for this office was Piero Soderini, a man of good intentions but of weak character. It was under his temporizing government that Florence had remained, to the epoch of the late expulsion of the French from Italy; and in this lapse of ten years, his want of energy had gradually lost him the popular affection and provoked opposition to his sway. On the other hand, since the death of Piero de' Medici, the cardinal Giovanni had succeeded, by his moderation and his sedulous protection of Florentines at the papal court, in effacing the animosity which the violent character of his brother had excited. Thus, when the viceroy of Naples, after the expulsion of the French from Italy, entered Tuscany with a small Spanish army, attended by the Medici, a strong party in Florence were already prepared to restore the exiled family of their ancient rulers to power. The gonfalonier was seized by a body of conspirators and deposed; he was conducted from the city without personal violence; and after eighteen years of banishment the Medici re-entered Florence as her masters. The functions of the general council were suppressed, and the government was entrusted to a perpetual balia of between sixty and seventy members, all creatures of the Medici and named by them exclusively.

Restoration of that family.

Servitude of the state.

Over this narrow and disgraceful oligarchy, which continued to administer the Florentine affairs until the last and temporary expulsion of the Medici in 1527, that family ruled with despotic

sway. Their house, when thus restored to power, was represented by the cardinal Giovanni and Giuliano, surviving sons of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and by their nephew, Lorenzo II., the son of their deceased elder brother; and they were attended by Giulio, natural son of that brother of Lorenzo de' Medici who fell in the conspiracy of the Pazzi. This illegitimate cousin of the cardinal Giovanni was one day like him to ascend the papal chair; and to assume the title of Clement VII. The triumph of the Medici was not followed by any signal acts of severity until the discovery of an abortive conspiracy against them; which is remarkable only as the celebrated Macchiavelli, who had been secretary of the republic, was a sharer in the plot. Upon him and others, the creatures of the Medici, after subjecting them to horrible tortures, passed sentences of banishment; but Leo X., on succeeding to the tiara, commenced his reign by an act of clemency to his countrymen, and procured an amnesty for all the conspirators. *

Affairs of Italy during the pontificate of Leo X.

The dissolution of the holy league was followed, almost immediately after the accession of Leo X., by new hostilities in Lombardy. Louis XII. and

* The details for this short abstract of Florentine constitutional history after the expulsion of the Medici, and of the revolution which restored them to power and suppressed the freedom of the state, are to be found scattered through the annals of Guicciardini, (particularly bb. ii. p. 83. v. p. 281. x. p. 549. xi. pp. 8—17.); and of Ammirato, (see especially bb. xxvi. p. 206. xxviii. pp. 269 and 303—ad fin. xxix. ad p. 313.)

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

Last enterprise of Louis XII. of France.

the Venetians once more allied themselves for the partition of the Milanese states; and a French army, crossing the Alps, invaded the duchy from the one side, while the republican forces attacked it on the other. But the Swiss thought their national honor engaged in the defence of Lombardy. The cantons poured their infantry into Italy to protect Maximilian Sforza; and these hardy bands, unassisted by cavalry, completely defeated the invading army near Novara, and put the French chivalry to so disgraceful a rout that this body, notwithstanding their ancient reputation for gallantry, precipitately abandoned the duchy and evacuated Italy without once daring to rein in their flight. After this new reverse of the French arms, the Swiss remained inactive in Lombardy; but the Spanish and papal forces fell upon the Venetian territories. Neither Leo X. nor Ferdinand of Spain, indeed, had declared war against the Venetians; but the Spanish viceroy was compelled to seek subsistence and employment for his army, and the confederates under his orders acted against Venice as auxiliaries of the emperor-elect, whose old quarrel with the republic was still open. But no great event marked the issue of the campaign; and a pacification between the papacy and the French king, which was effected before the close of the year, narrowed the circle of hostility.

His reconciliation with the papacy,

Louis XII., besides being wearied by a course of disasters, was sincerely desirous of reconciling himself with the church. He formally renounced

the support of the schismatic council of Pisa, whose seat had been transferred to Lyons; and after this act Leo X., who had no longer any object in opposing him, not only accepted his submission, but engaged the Swiss cantons to conclude their differences with him. The plans which the pope had secretly formed for the aggrandizement of his family, appeared likely to convert his peace with Louis into a close alliance. He induced his brother to leave the government of Florence in the hands of their nephew Lorenzo; and he designed to recompense Giuliano, by forming a principality for him of Parma and Placentia, which Julius II. had annexed to the Holy See, or even by raising him to the throne of Naples at the expence of Ferdinand of Spain. In these projects he was encouraged to expect the assistance of France and of Venice; when the sudden death of Louis XII. disconcerted his negociations, and put a check upon the schemes of Medicean ambition.

1514

and death. 1515

With the accession to the French throne of the celebrated prince who followed Louis XII., may be said to commence the last period of that struggle, wherein Italy was destined to survive the total extinction of national independence and honor: a struggle wherein she was hurled from the splendid distinction which she had occupied in the middle ages, and buried in the abyss of degradation from which she has never since risen. Hitherto it has been my endeavour to detail with some minuteness the shifting vicissitudes of her brilliant though troubled fortunes; for until the

The accession of Francis I. to the French crown

introduces a period of more comprehensive policy and warfare in Europe.

period at which we have now arrived, the seal had not been finally set upon the fate, which doomed her to be no more than the prize of ambition for the great rival powers of Europe. But after the accession of Francis I. to the French crown, and the subsequent union of Spain and the empire under Charles V., Italy became the arena of the gigantic contest, in which these puissant monarchs contended for the mastery. Hitherto Italian history had been distinctive and national: it was now for fifteen years to be inseparably blended with the general affairs of Europe; to be in itself but the memorial of servitude and misery, and attractive and important only as embraced in the comprehensive rivalry of the houses of France and Austria. In tracing the annals of Italy to the busy opening of the sixteenth century, I might hope to present the general English reader with circumstances which have been but partially told in our language; but I cannot pretend, within the limits necessarily imposed on this work, to describe at large the extensive political combinations and warfare which, after agitating all Europe, left Italy in subjection to the emperor Charles V. Nor would any desirable object be gained by the attempt to repeat the story of events, with which every historical student may be presumed to be familiar: since they are to be found in the pages of one of our most popular and elegant writers.* The remainder of the pre-

Impossibility of tracing its vicissitudes with minuteness in this work.

* In a work whose highest aim is but to satisfy the general enquiries of the reader into Italian history within a reasonable

sent chapter, then, will be occupied rather with an abstract or general view of the leading vicissitudes of Italy during the period to which it is devoted, than to any elaborate narrative of events.

General sketch of its events.

Conquest of the Milanese duchy by Francis I.

The chivalric gallantry and ambition of Francis I., which inspired him, almost immediately after his succession to the throne of Louis XII., with the design to retrieve the disgraces of the French arms and to assert the title of his dynasty to the Milanese crown, was the first circumstance which entailed a new series of disasters upon Italy. His defeat of the Swiss, in the sanguinary and well-contested field of Marignano, put a period to the protection which the brave infantry of the cantons had afforded to Maximilian Sforza; and the submission of that feeble prince, (who exchanged his ducal throne for a pension and a retreat in France,) the alliance of Venice, and the terror of Leo X., all seemed to promise the lasting establishment of the French monarch in the Milanese duchy. The death of Ferdinand the Catholic, early in the following year, put his power at rest from the machinations of that wily and perfidious enemy of his throne; and the abortive issue of a formidable expedition, which the emperor Maximilian led into Italy against the French and Venetian confederacy and concluded with his usual levity, confirmed the security of Francis. The measure, with which the young heir of the Spanish crown commenced his reign, however

Deposition of Maximilian Sforza.

Death of Ferdinand the Catholic.—Succession of his grandson Charles to the Spanish dominions. 1516

compass, his acquaintance with Robertson's Reign of the Emperor Charles V. is of course pre-supposed.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

insincere his moderation, gave under these circumstances an unusual period of repose to the peninsula. The amicable treaty of Noyon, concluded by Charles with the French king, was almost immediately followed by a pacification between his grandfather, the emperor Maximilian, and Venice. The republic recovered the entire possession of her continental provinces; and thus terminated the fierce and ruinous wars, into which she had been plunged by the league of Cambray. But though Venice had escaped from the destruction which menaced her, her strength was already sapped at its vitals; and to her latest hour she never recovered the exhaustion of her resources, and the gradual decay of her commerce and wealth, which had been simultaneous with that perilous contest. The conquest of Egypt by the Turks had already destroyed her lucrative connection with Alexandria and the Red Sea; and the spice trade with the east, which the Portuguese now carried on, since their discovery of the passage to India round the Cape of Good Hope, invaded the rich monopoly, which her merchants had previously engrossed through the ports of the Levant.

General peace in Italy. 1517

Competition of Charles of Spain and Francis I. for the imperial crown. 1519

The death of the old emperor Maximilian, and the competition of his grandson Charles and of Francis I. for the imperial dignity, after four years of peace, threatened interruption to the deep tranquillity of Italy. But two years passed after the election of Charles to the throne of the empire, before the flames of war were again lighted

up in the peninsula. In espousing a side in the quarrel between Francis and Charles, Leo X. could no longer be actuated by motives of family ambition. Both his brother Giuliano and his nephew Lorenzo were now dead, without male issue from their marriages. No legitimate heir remained of the race of the great Cosmo; and though the pope chose rather to consign the sovereignty of Florence to his bastard cousin, the cardinal Giulio, than to restore to his injured country her independence and republican rights, the desire of aggrandizing his house, which had engrossed him during the life-time of his brother and nephew, had necessarily expired with them. But Leo was still instigated by personal vanity and ambition; he was envious of the reputation which Julius II. had acquired by the extension of the papal dominions; and he desired to imitate that warlike pontiff, without possessing either his activity or political ability. After balancing between the great rival monarchs, he finally embraced the party of the emperor. Upon condition that Parma and Placentia should be re-annexed to the Holy See, he engaged with Charles to establish Francesco Sforza, brother of Maximilian, and second son of the Moor, in the rest of the Milanese dominions, and to assist in expelling the French from Italy.

Alliance of the pope and the emperor Charles V. against Francis I.

The weakness to which Francis abandoned his forces in the Milanese duchy, the misconduct of the sieur de Lautrec, the French viceroy, who commanded them, and the discontent with which

Conquest of the Milanese duchy by the confederates.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

his oppressive government had filled the people, all seconded the operations of the combined imperial and papal army. The confederates were gladly admitted into Milan and almost all the other cities of the duchy; and the French troops were compelled to retire for safety into the territory of the Venetians, who continued faithful to their alliance with Francis I. Parma and Placentia thus fell, as had been agreed, into the hands of the pope; but Leo X. only survived long enough to receive the first tidings of these successes, and to close his life and pontificate with the apparent accomplishment of his ambitious views. He died suddenly, not without some suspicion of poison; and his decease for a time paralyzed the spirit of the confederacy between the papacy and the empire.* In the mediocrity of his political character, there was indeed little to have rendered the abrupt dissolution of Leo X. an event of any importance at a less critical juncture; and his pontificate would have been remarkable only for the voluptuous profusion of his court, the scandalous sale of indulgences to recruit his exhausted coffers, and the consequent rise of the reformation: if his protection, partial as it was,† of letters and art

Death of Leo X. 1521

* For the affairs of Italy during the pontificate of Leo X., my authorities are principally Guicciardini, bb. xi—xiv. (ad p. 212.) Scipione Ammirato, Ist. Fior. b. xxix. pp. 313—340. Paolo Giovio, Vita di Leone X., from the third book, passim.

† The flatterers of the Medici family have not forgotten Leo X. He was, according to them, the most munificent patron of genius that ever appeared, except Lorenzo. As usual their eulogies have been echoed in England, and even with some absurdity of exag-

had not obtained for his memory a brilliant distinction in literary history.

Continued and unsuccessful enterprises of Francis I. in Italy.

In the disorder, into which the imperial and papal confederacy was thrown by the death of Leo X., the French might easily have recovered possession of the Milanese duchy. But a fatality seemed always to attend their operations in Italy. The scandalous negligence of Francis I., and the wasteful dissipation of his resources, left his general Lautrec without the means of supporting an army; and though that commander was joined in the next campaign by a numerous levy of Swiss infantry, and enabled to approach Milan at their head, his want of money soon entailed fresh ruin on the French affairs. His mercenaries, becoming mutinous at receiving no pay, obliged him to attack the imperialists under great disadvantages in their strong position at Bicocca; and, notwithstanding the valour by which the Swiss endeavoured to justify their own rashness, they were defeated with terrific slaughter. After this overthrow the French were once more compelled

1522

geration. Mr. Duppa, in his Life of Michelangiolo, was the first person who removed any portion of this delusion, and shewed that Leo was partial and capricious in his patronage. Another elegant scholar, whose subject has led him into a fuller consideration of the literary character of Leo, has since reduced the reputation of that pope to its just standard. Mr. Mills (Travels of Ducas) has exposed his neglect of Ariosto, Michelangiolo, and Lionardo da Vinci. After this, it is little praise to say that he patronized Paolo Giovio, Aretino, and a crowd of buffoons. Rafael was the only man of genius whom he constantly befriended.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

to evacuate Italy; and Francesco Sforza was seated on the throne of Milan.

Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan.

The obstinacy with which, notwithstanding every reverse, Francis I. still persisted in the resolution to support his pretensions to that duchy, induced the new pope Adrian VI. after vainly labouring for the restoration of peace to Christendom, to embrace the alliance of the emperor. The little dependence which the Venetians found it possible to repose upon so imprudent and reckless a monarch as Francis, and their fear of being abandoned to support the burthen of a contest against the emperor, led them also to change their party, and to form engagements with Charles for the maintenance of Sforza in the Milanese duchy.

1523

A league was therefore concluded between their republic, the emperor, the pope, the king of England, the duke of Milan, and other Italian powers, for the repose of Italy and its defence against Francis I. This powerful coalition could not deter the French sovereign from persevering in his designs. He assembled a numerous army for a new invasion of the peninsula; and as he was prevented, by suddenly discovering the conspiracy of the constable of Bourbon against his throne, from leading his forces in person, he dispatched them into Lombardy under his favorite, the admiral Bonnivet. The absolute want of ability in that courtier, whose counsels were to involve his master in yet more signal calamities, produced

1524

the destruction of the fine army which he com-

manded; and his rout at Biagrassa closed this invasion like all the similar expeditions which had preceded it.

These ill-conducted and unfortunate enterprises of the French, and the repeated successes of the imperial arms, were silently rivetting the chains of Italy. Charles V. was already all-powerful in the peninsula. He held the kingdom of Naples as a portion of his vast hereditary dominions; from Spain he drew the finest troops of the age; from his imperial authority in Germany, and from the states of his brother, the archduke of Austria, whose frontiers joined those of Italy, he derived an imposing power and warlike resources; and his bands held military occupation of Lombardy, and oppressed that beautiful country with all the horrors, which an ill-paid and ferocious soldiery could inflict. At this appalling epoch for the independence and happiness of Italy, the administration of the Holy See, which had always exercised so paramount, and often so fatal an influence, on the fortunes of the peninsula, fell into the hands of the pontiff, whose imbecile and fluctuating policy was to hasten the ruin of his country, and to overwhelm the capital of Christendom with an accumulation of horrors.

On the death of Leo X., an accident in the conclave had raised Adrian VI. to the tiara; and after the brief reign of this pontiff, which lasted not quite two years, the influence of the Medicean party in the sacred college placed Clement VII. (Giulio de' Medici) in the vacant chair of St. Peter.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

Pope Adrian VI.

The foreign birth of Adrian VI., his stern contempt for the arts, his austerity and bigotry, and even his monastic virtues, had all rendered him an object of hatred and ridicule to the corrupt and polished Italians.* The simplicity of his personal character, and his ignorance of political affairs, had alike disqualified him for the office, which might have graced his station, of protecting the liberties of the peninsula. But Clement VII., who succeeded him while the expedition of Bonnivet was yet in progress, was still less calculated to avert the impending ruin of Italy; and his misconduct aggravated the evils, for which the virtuous qualities of Adrian might at least have obtained a partial alleviation.

Pope Clement VII.

It was before the close of the same year with the discomfiture of Bonnivet, that Francis I. entered Lombardy at the head of a brilliant army, and commenced that fatal expedition which terminated with his captivity. While the fortune of his enterprise hung in suspence, both Clement VII. and the Venetians withdrew from supporting Charles V. in a contest, the successful issue of which, experience had proved, must confirm the

* The Romans detested the barbarian pontiff, who could denounce the groupe of the Laocoon in the Belvidere, as "the idols of the ancients," and the frescoes of Rafael in the Vatican, as useless ornaments. The death of Adrian VI. was hailed at Rome with universal joy, and during the night which followed that event, the gate of his physician was crowned with garlands of flowers and placarded with the inscription:

PATRIÆ LIBERATORI
S. P. Q. R.

servitude of Italy. The fears of the pope and the republic were the same: their desire was equal to effect a general pacification while the strength of the contending powers was still balanced; and both the Venetians, and Clement in the name of his see and of the Florentine state, signed a pacific treaty with the French king. If the pope at this juncture had sincerely joined Venice and the other native powers of the peninsula, as was proposed to him, in an armed neutrality, such a coalition might have dictated peace to the belligerents, and might yet have saved the cause of Italian independence. But the imbecility, the irresolution, and the avarice of Clement VII. rendered him incapable of a vigorous and enlightened policy. He hesitated and wavered, and suffered the struggle to proceed, which could only leave the peninsula at the mercy of the conqueror.

Disastrous consequences of the battle of Pavia to Italy.

It is not my intention to relate the vicissitudes of the eventful campaign in Lombardy, which closed with the famous battle of Pavia and the captivity of the French monarch. On that disastrous day, the sun of Italian independence was finally quenched in foreign blood; and from that hour, the emperor Charles V. secured the mastery of the peninsula, almost as completely as if he had annexed to his diadems of the empire and of Naples, the iron crown of Lombardy, the keys of St. Peter, and the sceptre of the Adriatic. The consternation of all the Italian powers was extreme; and their first endeavour was to form a general league for common defence; which, but a few

Charles V. all-powerful in the peninsula.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

months before, might have had an effectual and glorious result. But Clement VII., ever irresolute and vacillating, instead of vigorously uniting with the Venetians and the worsted French, suffered himself still to be amused by the imperial generals with faithless negociations, and even concluded a separate treaty and a new alliance with their master.

Attempt of the Italian powers to resist his yoke.

These commanders, imagining that they had thus no longer to fear a general league of the Italians, abandoned themselves without restraint to the indulgence of intolerable insolence and extortion. They thus at last drove the pope, who had already lost so many more promising occasions, to enter into a secret confederacy with the Venetians. The allies negociated for the support of the king of England and the Swiss; and they obtained from Louise, mother of the captive monarch of France and regent of his kingdom, a promise to renounce the French pretensions upon Milan, and to maintain Francesco Sforza on his throne. That prince was suffered by the tyranny of the imperial generals, who occupied his duchy with their troops, to enjoy only the shadow of sovereignty; and as soon as he found that he might expect the support of France, he in secret gladly entered into the league between the pope and the Venetians. The confederates observed with pleasure, that the greater part of the imperial army in Lombardy was already disbanded. Lannoy, the viceroy of Naples, had conveyed his royal captive to Spain, and the constable of Bour-

bon had followed him. The weakness of the imperial forces, and the absence of these commanders, were favorable to the views of the powers of the league; but they founded their hopes of success yet more upon the disgust with which the famous marquis of Pescara, who was left in command of the imperialists in Italy, was at this epoch known to be filled at the partiality of Charles V. for Lannoy.

Treachery of the marquis of Pescara.

Pescara, himself a Neapolitan nobleman, could not, it was imagined, be insensible to the degradation of Italy. His present temper of mind appeared likely to incline him to adopt any proposal of vengeance against the emperor; and so great was the estimation of his talents and influence, that the pope did not consider that, in offering the marquis the investiture of the kingdom of Naples, he should be rewarding his patriotism or stimulating his ambition and vengeance too highly. The agent of the allies in this delicate negociation was Girolamo Morone, chancellor of the Milanese duchy, who had by his consummate abilities for political intrigue rendered the court of his master, Sforza, the focus of the confederacy. To this man, Pescara listened with deep and anxious attention, while he gradually unfolded the able projects of the confederates, and shewed that the aid of the marquis, in dispersing the Spanish troops in quarters where they might be destroyed in detail, was alone necessary to the accomplishment of their schemes. Pescara finally embraced the cause of his country, but embraced it only to betray.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

Whether he had merely listened to the proposals of the allies to communicate them to Charles as he afterwards pretended; or whether, after engaging with sincerity in the Italian league, he was induced to abandon it from despair of its success; his treachery, either to his master or to his country, was alike certain and disgraceful.* After some delay, he made known the whole intrigue to the emperor; drew Morone to his quarters at Novara and arrested him; seized upon all the strong places in the Milanese duchy which the Spanish troops did not already occupy; and blockaded the duke Francesco himself in the castle of his capital. Pescara was already stricken with a mortal disorder before he had accomplished this iniquity; and he shortly died. His military exploits had been great; but their renown cannot extenuate the infamy, which brands his memory as the betrayer of his country.

Even after the discovery of Pescara's treachery, the wavering pontiff still hesitated to commit himself by hostilities; until he found, on the release of Francis I. from captivity, that the French monarch breathed vengeance against Charles V., and was resolved to evade the execution of the treaty which he had concluded with the emperor at Madrid. Then assured of the support of Francis and the

* Robertson (vol. ii. p. 315.) has too positively asserted the original sincerity of Pescara in the plot. That he was seduced by his thirst of revenge and the prospect of a crown was, from his conduct, most probable; but no proof was or could be given of the fact; and it should not have been stated as if the question had been free of all doubt.

General league of Italy for the recovery of independence. 1526

countenance of Henry VIII., the pope at last took his decision. The long-desired league for Italian independence was finally adjusted: to oblige the emperor to restore the Milanese duchy to Sforza, and to deliver up the sons of Francis whom he held as hostages, were declared to be the objects of the contracting parties. Besides the foreign powers, the pope, the state of Florence, the Venetian republic, and the duke of Milan, were the principal confederates; and as the pontiff placed himself at their head, they gave to their alliance the title of the Holy League.

Its important results.

But the struggle was vain against the destiny of Italy; or rather the hour was arrived, in which the want of energy and real union in her governments, the extinction of all courage and military spirit in the mass of her people,* the vices and

* Yet the high military reputation, which was acquired in these wars by several bodies of native mercenaries, raised by and serving under Italian captains, would seem an argument that the pusillanimity of the people existed only in the vices of their governments. The formation and exploits of the famous black bands (*bande nere*) may in particular be adduced as a proof, that the Italian nation, if its energies had been better directed, still contained the materials for a courageous army.

The black bands of Italy.

The black bands were raised by the celebrated condottiere Giovanni de' Medici, who was descended from a brother of the great Cosmo, and was himself the ancestor of the later ducal line of Tuscany. His troops, about five thousand men horse and foot, were almost all Tuscans, and acquired their distinctive appellation from the black standards, which they first bore during the mourning of their leader for his cousin Leo X. During the calamities of Italy, they were to be found alternately in the ranks of her

cowardice alike of her rulers and subjects, were to fill up the measure of her degradation and calamities. Numerous armies were indeed assembled by the Italian powers, but these were bodies without soul. They were neither warmed by the sense of honor, nor stung by the dread of intolerable shame: neither animated by a generous devotion in their country's cause, nor steeled by her wrongs to desperation and vengeance. The magnitude of the crisis could not rouse their generals

enemies and defenders: their excesses rendered them as great a scourge to their miserable country as the foreign soldiery; but the talents of their leader, their superior organization and ferocious valour, elevated their fame above that of almost all the troops of other nations. At the epoch of the battle of Pavia, they served in the army of Francis I.; in which were also the famous black bands of Germany, composed of landsknechts or infantry of that nation, and not to be confounded with the soldiers of Medici. In the subsequent war of the Italian league, Medici served the confederates, and was killed in a skirmish in Lombardy, shortly before the sack of Rome: having already, at the age of twenty-eight years, won a brilliant reputation for all the qualities of command, and sullied it by his personal vices and cruelty. On his death his bands, to evince their affection and regret for him, again changed their ensigns from white to black. They subsequently entered the pay of Florence, served as her contingent in the French army before Naples, and successively received from the republic for their colonel, Orazio Baglioni, and the count Ugo de' Pepoli; of whom the first was killed, and the second perished by disease in the expedition. In that unfortunate campaign, the black bands eminently distinguished themselves and suffered heavy loss, and with the capitulation of the French, their existence terminated. But several of the gallant officers who had served in them, were afterwards employed by the Florentines in their last struggle in training and commanding their militia.

to vigorous operations: the soldiery, if they fought at all, fought only with the indifference of mercenaries. The disgrace of the result must be branded, in truth, on the moral degeneracy, into which the nation had already sunk; but there were also various secondary causes for the failure. Francis I., whose reverses had now superadded a distrust in his own fortunes to the natural defects of his character, to his indecision and negligence, his abandonment to pleasure and his aversion for business, Francis I. shamefully deserted the support of his allies. The duke of Urbino, the general of the Venetians, whose rank obtained for him the supreme command of the confederates, though not destitute of military talents, was of all men, from his timid and cautious and indecisive character, least calculated to conduct the operations of a league, whose strength mouldered while he delayed. Although his forces were far superior to those of the imperialists in Lombardy, he suffered them to continue the siege of the castle of Milan, in which Sforza was still shut up. He gave time for the constable of Bourbon to arrive with reinforcements from Spain, and to assume the command of the enemy; and while he remained inactive in sight of Milan, the unfortunate duke was obliged to capitulate for the evacuation of his capital.

Fatal misconduct and vacillation of Clement VII.

But the irresolution and misconduct of the pope were even more conspicuous than the military errors of the confederates; and his infatuation completed the ruin of their cause. Terrified at the ill success of the league, and weary of the con-

test, he suffered himself to be deluded into negociations for peace by the agents of Charles V.; until his enemy, the cardinal Pompeo Colonna, with the forces of his powerful house surprised him in his capital, and obliged him to capitulate for a separate truce. His defection paralyzed the league; and their affairs were not improved when, as soon as his imminent danger was past, he imprudently resumed hostilities, only to be a second time lulled into security by a new suspension of arms between his troops and those of the viceroy of Naples. He disbanded his forces, and not even the advance of Bourbon towards Rome with his army from Lombardy—equally formidable for their numbers, their ferocity, and their licentious contempt of all authority,—could rouse him to a sense of his danger.

Bourbon had been left by the emperor, whose finances were always in disorder, absolutely destitute of all means of supporting the numerous forces which served under the imperial standard: German, Spanish, and Italian,—for Italians were ever to be found in arms against their national cause. He was compelled to lead them to find subsistence in the papal territories; and, on their repeated mutinies for want of pay, could appease them only by offering to their passions the riches and sack of Rome. The duke of Urbino followed him at a distance with the confederate army, and either from his habitual timidity, or his hatred of the house of Medici, made not an effort to succour the pope. It was to no purpose that the viceroy

of Naples informed Bourbon of the new suspension of arms which he had concluded with the pope. The constable was perhaps unwilling, he was certainly unable, to arrest the advance of his lawless host; and he led them, in the last hour of his disgraceful career, to the assault of the venerable capital of Christendom.—I may draw a veil over the horrors that followed: the immensity of human wickedness and human suffering, the fearful and protracted reign of lust, and rapine, and blood. Never had Rome, in her prostration before the barbarians of the north, in the long retribution for her ancient tyranny over the universe, endured such extremity of woe, as agonized her wretched population on this dreadful and memorable occasion. Amidst such a scene, the captivity of the imbecile pontiff was the lightest of calamities, which his own incapacity had eminently provoked. After vainly seeking refuge in the castle of St. Angelo, he was compelled to deliver himself a prisoner to the imperial arms. *

Sack of Rome by the imperialists. 1527

The horrible sack of Rome, and yet more the captivity of the father of the church, excited universal indignation in Europe; wherever the new religious opinions had not yet penetrated. Upon this occasion, at least, Francis I. was roused to vigorous exertion, as well by policy as by mistaken piety, in the endeavour to rescue the pope

* For the period between the death of Leo X. and the sack of Rome,—six of the most calamitous years in Italian history,—our sufficient and almost only guide is still Guicciardini, bb. xiv. p. 212.—xviii. p. 448.

from the hands of Charles V. Henry VIII. shared his zeal and his alarm at the progress of the imperial power, and engaged by treaty to assist him with subsidies. Italy was chosen for the theatre of their combined efforts; and Lautrec once more crossed the Alps at the head of a powerful French army, and began to co-operate actively with the Venetians in Lombardy. The duke of Ferrara and the marquis of Mantua joined the confederacy against the imperialists; and the Florentines, though on the news of the capture of the pope they had risen against the Medicean yoke, and expelled the cardinals who governed their state for Clement VII., also earnestly embraced the French alliance. Thus the Florentines entered the league, whose object it was to procure freedom for the pope, their immediate enemy; but, with the restoration of their republic, had appeared also their ancient and enthusiastic attachment to a French connection. They justly regarded the emperor as the most dangerous foe to the liberties of Italy; and they were hurried away alike by dread of his designs, and by the indulgence of their old affections, to declare against him and in favor of his rival. Thus they imprudently, as we say at least after the event, lost the only opportunity which the unhappy circumstances of the times afforded of saving some wrecks of freedom, by at once throwing themselves into the arms of the emperor, and committing their cause to his protection and generosity.

While the operations of the allies were proceed-

ing favorably in Lombardy, they solemnly published the renewal of their league. It now embraced the kings of France and England, the republics of Venice and Florence, the dukes of Milan and Ferrara, and the marquis of Mantua; and these contracting parties declared the captive pope the head of their confederacy. Their arms might easily have recovered for Francesco Sforza the possession of his whole duchy, for the imperialists at Milan were now in very small force; but Lautrec had his master's commands not to bring the war in Lombardy to a conclusion; lest the Venetians and Sforza, having no farther reason to fear the emperor, should relax in their efforts. He therefore, alleging his orders for the immediate deliverance of the pope, led his army towards southern Italy. He had scarcely entered the papal territories when Clement, who had already signed an agreement with imperial commissioners for his ransom, escaped from his prison on the day preceding that on which he was to be set at liberty, and arrived at the French camp. But dismayed and humiliated by his misfortunes, the feeble pontiff in recovering his freedom was prepared to renounce all his former projects, and desirous only of peace; although he did not refuse the support of the confederacy.

The object for which he had entered the papal dominions being concluded by the release of Clement VII., Lautrec now passed on to attempt the conquest of the kingdom of Naples. On his approach, the imperial generals with difficulty pre-

1528

vailed on their troops to quit Rome; where they had remained inactive for ten months, and prolonged the unspeakable horrors of the first sack. A fearful pestilence which, to deepen the calamities of Italy, was now spreading over the land, had already borne its destroying vengeance among this ruffian soldiery; and before their evacuation of Rome, above half their numbers had been swept off by its ravages, and by other disorders, the effects of intemperance and debauchery. The enfeebled remains of the imperialists were pursued by Lautrec at the head of his flourishing army; almost the whole kingdom of Naples, impatient to throw off the Spanish yoke, declared for the French; the forces of Charles V. were shut up in the capital; and while the combined fleets of France, and Venice, and Genoa, successively appeared off the harbour and intercepted all supplies, Lautrec with his superior army commenced a rigid blockade by land.

But Lautrec suffered the siege of Naples to linger in indecision, until it terminated by a total change in the relative condition of the combatants. His troops being encamped during the sultry season in the environs of the capital, which are at such periods always unhealthy, were attacked by violent sickness. Some of their prisoners communicated to them the pestilence which had been so destructive at Rome; and while the imperialists recovered health and confidence, contagious and epidemic diseases made fearful havoc among the besiegers, and plunged them into dis-

couragement and misery, which were aggravated as usual by the neglect of their sovereign to their pecuniary necessities. In this critical position of affairs, the imprudence of Francis, by provoking the defection of the hero of Genoa, the famous admiral Andrea Doria, brought despair and destruction on the French army.

Condition of Genoa.

In the vicissitudes of the long wars, which had desolated Italy since the first entrance of the French, Genoa, so fallen from her ancient glories during the whole of the fifteenth century, had generally shared the ignominious fortunes of the Milanese duchy. As the French and their enemies prevailed in turn, her political condition had miserably oscillated under foreign sovereignty, between the alternate preponderance of adverse and implacable factions. Latterly, she had groaned under imperial tyranny until, during the temporary success of the confederates, and by the aid of Doria, the faction of the Fregosi and the French dominion were re-established within her walls.

Fortunes and character of Andrea Doria.

Doria, whose name has eclipsed or enhanced the earlier splendour of his illustrious house, had been bred to the sea like his noble ancestors, and had early entered the naval service of France. Although he had passed little of his life in his native city, his anxiety for her liberties and prosperity was not the less enthusiastic. He had created a numerous squadron which followed his personal fortunes; and his indignation at the wrongs sustained by Genoa, in the sack and pillage which

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

had attended the triumph of the imperialists in 1522, rendered him the most dreaded enemy on the ocean of the Spanish name. Animated by hatred to common enemies, he had hitherto served the French cause with fidelity and zeal; but his honest sincerity had provoked the rancorous dislike of the courtiers of Francis I., and that monarch was filled by their arts with suspicion and distrust of him. His valuable counsel was treated with slight and neglect; his eminent services were repaid by insult and ingratitude. These private affronts he keenly felt as a high-spirited and honorable man; but his animosity against the imperialists might have stifled his sense of personal injury, if he had not had abundant reason to perceive that it was the purpose of Francis I. to regard his country, not as an independent republic, but as a conquered and subject city. As the term of his engagement with that monarch was about to expire, he boldly demanded justice for his country and himself. Francis replied by dispatching an officer to supersede him in the command of the French fleet, and even to seize his person and his own gallies. Doria honorably delivered up the French vessels; but he declared that, for his gallies, they were his own to do with as he would. With this force he withdrew; and the French admiral dared not molest his retreat. He immediately concluded a negociation with Charles V. His principal demand was the freedom of his native city; and the emperor, who

knew the value of his services, received them upon his own terms, and in the issue faithfully observed his engagements.

The first operation of Doria was to return with relief and protection for the imperial army to Naples, which he had before blockaded. On his arrival the French, who had lost their naval superiority by his defection, were, in addition to the former horrors of pestilence, now reduced to all the calamities of want. They were in their turn besieged in their camp; Lautrec himself sank under the weight of mental agony and bodily disease; and on his death the miserable remains of the French army were reduced to a disgraceful capitulation. After this success, Doria immediately sailed for Genoa. The French garrison in that city were weak; the people hailed their noble deliverer with gratitude and support; their tyrants were obliged to capitulate; and the republic of Genoa revived.

He restores the republic, under the protection of Charles V.

It was now in the power of Doria to have rendered himself the master of his country; for the emperor, who loved not the name of freedom, offered to invest him with the title of prince of Genoa, and to maintain him in the sovereignty of that state. But the proposal served only to display the magnanimity of the hero and to confirm his true greatness. He refused to raise himself upon the ruin of his country. He insisted upon the accomplishment of the imperial promise to recognize the liberties of the republic. He completely pacified her factions, which had hitherto

His magnanimous patriotism.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

seemed implacable; and so disinterested was his patriotism, so noble his ambition, that he declined the office of doge, because he deemed its useful exercise incompatible with his continuance in the imperial service, by which he hoped to preserve the protection of Charles for his fellow-citizens. Well did he merit, even to the close of a long and honorable life, the titles which their gratitude inscribed on his statue: the best of citizens, the successful champion, and the restorer of public liberty.*

Desertion of the Italian league by Clement VII. and Francis I.

Doria had at least obtained a municipal independence for his native city: he could not control the fate of Italy or defer the hour of her servitude. The destruction of one French army before Naples, and the surprise and dispersion of a second in Lombardy, which almost immediately followed, put a term to the hopes of Francis I. Broken in spirit, and exhausted in resources by an unvaried train of disasters, he thought no longer of retrieving his disgraces by arms; to obtain the release of his children, he scrupled not to desert his allies and to forfeit his honor. The pope, equally unscrupulous and yet more eager for peace, anticipated him in the desertion of the Italian confederacy. He found a pacific disposition in the emperor which seconded his own. Charles had many reasons for desiring a pacification which he could dictate as a conqueror: the embarrassment and exhaustion of his finances; the alarming pro-

* ANDRIÆ AURIÆ, CIVI OPTIMO, FELICISSIMOQUE VINDICI ATQUE AUTORI PUBLICÆ LIBERTATIS, S: P: Q: G, POSUERE.

gress of the reformation in Germany; the danger which menaced that country from the power of the Turks, who had already over-run Hungary. To detach Clement VII. from the number of his enemies, he granted him the most favorable terms; his principal stipulation was to reduce Florence again under the yoke of the Medici; and for this and other objects the pope, by the treaty of Barcelona, was content to betray Italy to the imperial yoke. But the monstrous perfidy and baseness of the French king, almost immediately afterwards, diverted the reproaches and indignation of Italy from the lighter dishonor of the impotent and faithless pontiff. By the peace, which Francis concluded with the emperor at Cambray, he abandoned all his confederates, at the moment when he was urging them to persevere in hostilities by earnest promises of continued support. He stipulated nothing in favor of the Venetians, or of the dukes of Milan and Ferrara; nothing for the Florentines, who had provoked the imperial vengeance by his alliance; nothing for the French adherents in the Neapolitan kingdom, who had incurred the penalties of rebellion by their attachment to his cause.

by the treaty of Barcelona, 1529

and peace of Cambray.

After having triumphed as much by his negociations as his arms, Charles V. at length appeared in person in Italy, with the imposing power and the pride of a victor. Doria with his gallies escorted him from Spain; strong reinforcements for his Italian army attended or awaited him; and their junction with the imperialists already

in the peninsula formed a numerous and brilliant assemblage of veteran troops. The powers of Italy were prostrate before him; but the situation of his affairs in Germany imposed on him a moderation, which was foreign to his severe and haughty temper. He granted peace to the Venetians and the duke of Ferrara on tolerable conditions; he pardoned Francesco Sforza, and permitted him the possession of the Milanese duchy; he received the dukes of Savoy and Urbino, and the marquisses of Montferrat and Mantua with indulgence, and raised the last of these princes to the ducal dignity; he treated Sienna and Lucca, which had long been devoted to the imperial party, with favor; and upon the republic of Genoa in particular, he conferred several privileges through consideration for Doria, whom he loaded with distinction. But all these acts spoke only the good pleasure of a master, who had no longer any thing to dread from conquered and terrified subjects. Venice, though she preserved her territories, felt her weakness and the decay of her resources, and trembled before him; the pope was yet more powerless; the kingdom of the Two Sicilies was his; the dukes of Milan, Savoy, Ferrara, Mantua, Urbino and other petty princes, the republics of Genoa, Sienna, and Lucca, were conscious that they existed only by his sufferance.

Final subjection of Italy to the emperor Charles V. 1530

Thus the coronation of Charles V., which the pope performed at Bologna, was a galling and too certain type of the servitude of Italy; and when the emperor, after that ceremony, passed into

Germany, he had perfected a despotism, the security of which left him no cause for future inquietude. *

The fatal corruption of the Italian mind had too long and too well prepared the nation for servitude; and in the vivid recollection of suffering during so many years of cruel warfare, the people were ready to hail any pacification with transports of joy. The repose which Charles V. bestowed upon Italy, while he rivetted the yoke on her degenerate sons, was therefore received with universal acclamations of gratitude and delight. One city alone spurned the general humiliation and nobly preferred to cling to the last hope of independence, rather than to share in a peace, which was to be obtained only by an ignominious submission. Florence, the most illustrious of the Italian republics of the middle ages, the bright exemplar of their generous passion for freedom, their early civilization and commerce, and their intellectual splendour, Florence alone amidst the degradation of Italy was awakened to the magnanimous spirit of former times. Originally, after having resisted for centuries all the efforts of tyranny, she had surrendered herself, not to open oppression or foreign violence, but to the abuse of popular affection and to the seductive arts and insidious virtues of a republican family. After having long yielded almost unconsciously

* Guicciardini, bb. xviii. p. 448.—xx. p. 549. Bernardo Segni, Storia Fior. ad b. iv. p. 115. Robertson, Reign of Charles V. b. v.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

LAST STRUGGLE OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC. 1527—1530

to the absolute dominion of that family, she had twice roused herself and shaken off their authority; and now, in the extreme hour of Italian shame, amidst the mouldered ruins of Italian liberty, she seemed to revive by the memory of her ancient greatness, for one dauntless though expiring struggle. As she had surpassed all her sister states in wealth, and power, and elegant refinement, so it became her to survive their rivalry and to perish the latest:—to gather the robe of republican virtue around her, and to fall the last victim in that cause, of which she had once been the guardian and firmest support.

The Medici.

The death of Leo X. had extinguished the legitimate male posterity of Cosmo de' Medici; and there remained only three bastards of his house, whose dubious title to the name which they bore increased the shame of submission to their sovereignty. These were Guilio de' Medici (Clement VII.), and two youths, Alessandro and Ippolito, the reputed sons, the former of Lorenzo (son of Piero II.), and the latter of Giuliano (youngest brother of Leo X.) When Clement VII. ascended the papal chair, he displayed more attachment to imaginary family interests than to the welfare of his country; and though the blood of Alessandro and Ippolito was even more impure or suspicious than his own, he chose to identify their elevation with the continued grandeur of the Medici. It was therefore that he designed for them the sovereignty of Florence, and appointed a regency of three cardinals to govern for them during their

minority. When the Florentines had succeeded, during his own captivity, in banishing this Medicean regency without bloodshed, he still adhered as to a darling passion to the hope of again reducing Florence under his despotic authority, and transmitting its sovereignty to his destined heirs. Thus, in betraying Italy to Charles V. by the treaty of Barcelona, he made that object his principal condition. Ippolito, one of his cousins, he had placed in the church, and bestowed on him a cardinal's hat. The temporal dignity of the Medici was therefore represented by the other, Alessandro, alone; and it was for him that the emperor engaged to reserve the sovereignty of Florence and the hand of his own natural daughter.

Their second expulsion from Florence.

Renewal of the republican constitution.

On the recovery of their independence, the Florentines had re-established their republican constitution pretty much as it had existed before the restoration of the Medici in 1512. It was vested in a general council of the citizens, who elected the gonfalonier and signiory: the supreme magistrate was now to hold his office, not for life, but for one year only; the signiory was changed every three months. With liberty revived the spirit of faction, from the baleful effects of which it would seem that no republic can ever hope to escape. Florence had again her aristocratical and popular parties; nor were there wanting in her counsels some remains of the religious fanaticism that had formerly distinguished the followers of Savonarola, of whom a few were yet living. The

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

LAST STRUGGLE OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC. 1527—1530

Resolution of the Florentines to maintain their liberties, against the emperor and the Medici.

secret adherents of the Medici, too, were not inactive; and, as the crisis grew more alarming, their numbers were swelled by the accession of all those, whose prudence or timidity was greater than their patriotism. But the mass of the citizens were sincere and zealous in the resolution to maintain their newly recovered rights, and prepared to evince it by the endurance of every privation and danger. Thus, although abandoned by all their allies, they firmly rejected every proposal of submission either to the emperor or the pope; and though Andrea Doria, who eagerly desired to save their liberties from total ruin, offered, before the treaty of Barcelona, to secure them the protection of Charles V. by his mediation, they finally refused to quit the alliance of France, or to accept any compromise with the emperor.

Their gallant and protracted defence.

Their courage was shortly put to the severest trial, and their pledge of constancy was nobly redeemed even by the unhappy issue of the struggle. Abandoned by France and by Italy, assailed by the united forces of the empire and the church, the kingdoms of Spain and of Naples, this people, heretofore so unwarlike, surprised the world by a gallant, a protracted, and a skilful defence. A new military spirit seemed at once kindled in them by the justice of their cause, and even by the appalling desolation in which they were left. Deprived of all hope of foreign succour, they resolved to place their sole dependence on a national militia. The population of their

capital and territory were armed and enrolled into regular battalions; the property of individuals was cheerfully sacrificed to the public good; their defences were improved and augmented; and the immortal Michelangiolo, who was charged with the office of director general of the fortifications of Florence, consecrated his sublime genius to the noblest, the best of purposes, the service of his suffering country.

The public courage only rose as the storm of war burst upon the state. The imperial army, which had annihilated the French before Naples, entered Tuscany under the prince of Orange. The same general who, after the death of Bourbon, had commanded at Rome, and the remains of the same ferocious bands, which had sacked his capital and held him captive, were thus now instigated by Clement VII. to accomplish his vengeance against his native city; and the force of this invading army was soon augmented, by the junction of the other imperial troops in Italy, to forty thousand men. Yet against the vastly superior numbers of this veteran army, composed of the finest troops of the age, the newly levied militia of Florence, aided only by a few condottieri and their bands, maintained an obstinate contest for above twelve months, and more than once balanced the fortune of the war. After reducing the surrounding territory, the imperialists penetrated to the walls of Florence, and surrounded the city on all sides with their intrenchments. But they were repulsed in an attempt to carry the defences by

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

LAST STRUGGLE OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC. 1527—1530

escalade; they were compelled to convert the siege into a blockade; and they were harassed, and they suffered many losses, as well by the frequent and vigorous sallies of the defenders, as by the active and desultory operations of Florentine partizans from without. In one of these encounters at Gavinana, the prince of Orange himself was slain; but his death was more than counterbalanced by the fall in the same action of the most gallant and enterprising leader of the Florentines, Francesco Ferrucci, and the destruction of the detachment which he had commanded. The imperialists had not however purchased their victory without an immense carnage; and their main army was already thrown into such discouragement by the death of their commander, that a general assault upon their lines before Florence might at this crisis have won the deliverance of the city. The signiory, perceiving the importance of the juncture, sent orders to their captain general, Malatesta Baglioni, lord of Perugia, to issue with their whole force and attack the imperial camp. But treason had already sealed the fate of the unhappy republic. Baglioni had for some time been in treaty with the enemy; and the moment was arrived when the traitor could find associates in the city. A pestilence, after assailing the besieging army, had been communicated from their camp to the city; its terrors were augmented by the dread of approaching famine; and when Baglioni refused obedience to the commands of the signiory to make a

last and desperate effort against the besiegers, he was seconded by the secret adherents of the Medici, and by all who were wearied of privation and suffering and terrified at the threatened accumulation of evils. Supported by these men, Baglioni, to his and their eternal infamy, delivered one of the bastions of the city to the imperial troops; and Florence was lost.

Fall of Florence.

From the extremity of misery, from a civil war in the streets, a fruitless aggravation of carnage,* and a frightful pillage by the foreign soldiery, Florence was saved by the submission of the signiory to inevitable fortune. They obtained for their country an honorable capitulation; but conditions are of little avail, when they are conceded by sovereigns without faith, and afterwards appealed to by men without power. In the name of his master and of the emperor, the papal commissioner granted a general amnesty to the citizens, and guaranteed the preservation of Florentine liberty under such a modified constitution as should subsequently be determined. But the treaty was scarcely dry before it was shamelessly violated; and by a refinement of insult and mockery of faith, the constitutional forms of the republic were the instruments chosen for its de-

* Varchi, the partizan of the Medici, has a statement, which seems to have escaped Sismondi's notice, but which gives a striking proof of the desperation and slaughter of the Florentine defence: that 14,000 of the imperialists and 8000 citizens fell in the single campaign, which decided the fate of the republic.

CHAP. VIII. PART II.

LAST STRUGGLE OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC. 1527—1530

struction. The papal commissioner had no sooner entered the city with the emigrants of the Medicean faction, than he obliged the signiory to summon a parliament of the people. By foreign halberds, the mass of the citizens were either beaten back from the public place, or deterred from attending. A few hundreds of the Medicean partizans and of the lower populace were alone suffered to enter, and by the breath of this pretended assemblage of the people, a balia was formed of the creatures of the Medici. Then torture, exile, or death fell upon the principal champions of liberty; more than one, whom the sword of the executioner was suffered to spare, perished in prison by poison or hunger; and before the prolonged balia resigned their functions, they had declared Alessandro de' Medici the first duke of Florence, and formally suppressed even the name of the republic. *

Alessandro de' Medici, first duke of Florence. Extinction of the republic.

* Several distinguished Florentines, though with very opposite partialities, have carefully commemorated the touching circumstances, which marked the last struggle of their expiring republic. Among them, see particularly Bernardo Segni, Storia Fior. *passim* ad b. v. p. 128. Giacopo Nardi, Stor. Fior. b. viii. p. 329. ad fin. Comment. di Filippo de' Nerli, &c. bb. vii. p. 151.—x. p. 242. Benedetto Varchi—a tedious informant—Stor. Fior. bb. iii. p. 111.—xi. p. 260. Guicciardini, *ubi supra*.

M. Sismondi (c. 121) has availed himself of these records (and of others which I have not thought it necessary to consult) with minute accuracy and skill; and the conclusion of his fairest and most splendid theme is wrought with an animation and an eloquence, which even surpass his usual happiness of style and reflection.

Guicciardini, the master of political wisdom, the severe and deep-searching observer of human action, whose work survives not only as the most precious record of his times, but as the storehouse of philosophical history,—Guicciardini himself, appears little to his honor in the catastrophe of his country's liberties. The enemy of popular rights, the devoted partizan of the Medici, under whom he had exercised several high employments, he took an odious share in the perfidy and vengeance which followed their final success;—and he was repaid with retributive ingratitude.

CHAPTER IX.

STATE OF ITALY DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, A.D. 1530—1600.

Insignificance of Italian History after the Subjugation of the Peninsula by Charles V.—General Affairs of Italy after that Epoch, until the Peace of Cateau Cambresis: a Period of frequent Wars—The Limits and Existence of the Italian States regulated by the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis—Italy ceases to be the Theatre of European Contest; and remains undisturbed by Wars to the Close of the Sixteenth Century—Oppression and Misery of her People—Particular and domestic Fortunes of the different Italian States during all this Period—NAPLES AND MILAN—*Oppressive Character and ruinous Influence of the Spanish Administration in those States—Repeated and vain Attempts to establish the Spanish Inquisition in them*—THE POPEDOM—*Decline of its Splendour—Succession of Pontiffs—Paul IV.—Change introduced by him in the Objects of papal Policy—The Popes, the Persecutors of the reformed Faith—Mal-administration of their own States—Brief Interval of vigorous Government—Sixtus V.—Grandeur of his Character*—RISE OF THE DUCAL HOUSE OF PARMA—*Pietro Luigi Farnèse, Son of Pope Paul III., the first Duke—His Assassination—Reverses of Ottavio, his Son and Successor—The Grandeur of the House of Farnèse established by Alessandro, the famous Prince of Parma*—FERRARA AND MODENA—*Extinction of the Legitimate Line of Este—Ferrara annexed to the Holy See—Decay of that Capital and Duchy—The Seat of the House of Este transferred to Modena*—MANTUA—*Annexation of Mont-*

ferrat to that Duchy—Savoy—*Unfortunate Reign of Duke Charles III.—Spoliation of his States—His Son, Emmanuel Philibert, restores the Fortunes of his House—His glorious and pacific Reign—Charles Emmanuel I.—Succeeds in closing the Gates of Italy against the French*—Tuscany—*Government of Florence after the Extinction of the Republic—Alessandro de' Medici, the first Duke or Doge—His Tyranny and Excesses—His Assassination by his Cousin Lorenzino—Cosmo de' Medici, his Successor; triumphs over the last Effort of the Republican Exiles, and treats them with merciless Cruelty—He acquires the Sovereignty of Sienna—Fall of that Republic—Cosmo I. created Grand-duke of Tuscany—Fearful Tragedy in his Family—His Son, the Grand-duke Francesco—His atrocious System of Assassinations—His Marriage with Bianca Capello, "Daughter of the Venetian Republic"—Romantic Story of that Lady—The Grand-duke and his Duchess poisoned by his Brother, the Cardinal Ferdinando—Reign of Ferdinando, Grand-duke of Tuscany—Lucca—Establishment of the Oligarchy of that Republic*—Genoa—*Aristocratical Constitution promoted by Andrea Doria—Popular Discontents—Conspiracy of Fiesco—Its successful Execution, rendered abortive by the Death of its Leader—Final Consolidation of the Genoese Oligarchy*—Venice—*Unimpaired Vigour of her Oligarchical Despotism; and internal Tranquillity of the State—Decay of the foreign Power of the Republic—Neutrality wisely observed by her Senate; but twice interrupted during this Period by Turkish Wars—The first of these, concluded by the Loss of several Colonies—The second, a yet more ruinous Struggle—Conquest of Cyprus by the Turks—League of Christian Powers with Venice against the Infidels—Great Battle of Lepanto—That Victory of the League, entirely without Fruits—Peace purchased by Venice with the Loss of Cyprus.*

CHAP. IX.

Insignificance of Italian history after the

With her subjection to the emperor Charles V., the national existence of Italy may be said to have terminated; and from this epoch, until she was roused from the lethargy of three centuries,

CHAP. IX.

Subjugation of the peninsula by Charles V.

only to suffer anew in the gigantic revolutions of our times, and to become again the prize of foreign tyrants, her history is almost a blank. The fall of her independence was coeval with the decline of honorable energy and social virtue in her people; and the extinction of all interest in their history is simultaneous with the completion of their moral and political degradation. In conducting the subject of these volumes to its conclusion,—that is, to the moment at which the French revolution burst upon the astonished world,—our course will be rapid and our notices general.

Fallen from her rank amongst the nations of Europe, Italy ceased to mingle in their political combinations. Her greatest provinces were immediately subject to strangers; her petty sovereigns, and her few surviving republics, ignobly followed in the train of foreign negociation and foreign conquest. Except the insignificant vicissitudes of her native dynasties, we shall find scarcely any thing in her languid annals and protracted servitude to arrest our attention; for even though her two principal maritime republics—their glories faded and their ancient importance extinguished—were still suffered to preserve the remnants of sovereignty, their fate only attracts our curiosity from the associations of the past, and their condition cannot otherwise excite our interest, than as we should contemplate the venerable but dilapidated ruins of antiquity. Such is the poverty of Italian history in the remainder of

the sixteenth, in the whole of the seventeenth, and in the eighteenth century, until the commencement of the wars of the French revolution, that we shall find no difficulty in compressing the events of these three long periods into the same number of chapters. In each, a few pages will suffice to describe the general political aspect of the peninsula: whatever is worth narrating in the particular and domestic fortunes of individual states, may afterwards be told briefly, under an equal number of separate heads.

General affairs of Italy after that epoch until the peace of Cateau Cambresis: a period of frequent wars. 1530—1559

The first circumstance, after the peace of Cambray, which interrupted the ignominious repose of Italy, was the renewal of hostilities between Francis I. and the emperor. During the expedition of Charles V. against Tunis, the French monarch availed himself of the distraction of the imperial strength to commence his offensive operations. His troops broke into the territories of the duke of Savoy, against whom he had some causes of dissatisfaction, and easily wrested all Savoy and the greater part of Piedmont from that feeble prince; while the imperialists took possession of the remainder of his states under pretence of defending them. Meanwhile the death of Francesco Sforza, who left no posterity, revived the long wars for the possession of the Milanese state. On the one hand, Francis I., alleging that he had only ceded that duchy to Sforza and his descendants, insisted that his rights returned to him in full force by the decease of that prince without issue: on the other, Charles V.

1535

CHAP. IX.

anticipated his designs by seizing the duchy as a lapsed fief of the empire. Francis I., after some hollow negociations with his crafty rival, once more staked the decision of his pretensions on a trial of arms. Lombardy became again the theatre of furious contests between the French and imperialists; but the usual fortunes of Francis still pursued him; and although his troops inflicted a sanguinary defeat on their opponents in the battle of Cerisolles, the fruits of their victory were lost by the necessity, under which the French monarch was placed, of turning his strength to the defence of the northern frontiers of his own kingdom. The peace of Crespi in the same year left Charles in possession of Lombardy; and though Francis still retained part of the dominions of the duke of Savoy, the despotic authority of his rival over Italy remained unshaken.

1544

The tranquillity restored to the peninsula by the peace of Crespi was not materially disturbed for several years. This period was indeed signalized by the abortive conspiracy of Fiesco at Genoa, and earlier by the separation of Parma and Placentia from the papal dominions, and their erection into a sovereign duchy. These territories, which originally formed part of the Milanese states, had first been annexed to the Holy See by the conquests of Julius II.; they had frequently changed masters in the subsequent convulsions of Italy; and their possession had finally been confirmed to the papacy by the consent of Francesco Sforza. By the subserviency of the sacred

college, the reigning pontiff Paul III., of the family of Farnèse, was suffered to detach these valuable dependencies from the Holy See, and to bestow them upon his son with the ducal dignity. 1545 But neither the trifling change which was wrought in the divisions of Lombardy by the creation of the duchy of Parma and Placentia, nor the dangerous conspiracy of Fiesco, affected the general 1547 aspect and the quietude of Italy.

Shortly after the death of pope Paul III., however, the determination of the emperor to spoil his family, obliged Ottavio Farnèse, the reigning duke of Parma, to throw himself into the arms of Henry II., the new monarch of France; and thus a new war was kindled in Lombardy and Pied- 1551 mont, in which the French appeared, as the defenders of Ottavio, against the forces of Charles V. and of the new pope, Julius III. The war of Parma produced no memorable event, until it was extended into Tuscany by the revolt of Sienna against the grievous oppression of the Spanish garrison, which the people had themselves introduced to curb the tyranny of the aristocratical faction of their republic. After expelling their 1552 Spanish masters, the Siennese invited the aid of the French for the maintenance of their liberties against the emperor. The war in Tuscany was marked by some alternations of success, but the French were finally expelled from that province; and after an obstinate siege and a gallant defence of ten months, Sienna was reduced by the impe- 1555 rial arms.

CHAP IX.

When, in the same year with this event, the emperor Charles V. executed the extraordinary resolution of abdicating his throne and resigning his immense possessions to his son Philip II., the flames of war which had raged in Europe with such intense violence during the greater part of his long reign, seemed already expiring in their embers. But they were re-kindled in Italy, almost immediately after the accession of Philip II., by the fierce passions of Paul IV., a rash and violent pontiff. In his indignation at the opposition which Charles V. had raised against his election, and moreover to gratify the ambition of his family, Paul IV. had already instigated Henry II. of France to join him in a league to ruin the imperial power in Italy; and he now, in concert with the French monarch, directed against Philip II. the hostile measures which he had prepared against his father. Philip II., that most odious of tyrants, whose atrocious cruelty and imbecile superstition may divide the judgment of mankind between execration and contempt, shrank with horror from the impiety of combating the pontiff, whom he regarded as the vicegerent of God upon earth. He therefore vainly exhausted every resource of negociation, before he was reconciled by the opinion of the Spanish ecclesiastics, whom he anxiously consulted, to the lawfulness of engaging in such a contest. At length he was prevailed upon to suffer the duke of Alva to lead the veteran Spanish bands from the kingdom of Naples into the papal territories. The advance of Alva to the gates of Rome, however, struck

1556

consternation into the sacred college; and the haughty and obstinate pontiff was compelled by the terror of his cardinals to conclude a truce with the Spanish general, which he immediately broke on learning the approach of a superior French army under the duke de Guise.

This celebrated captain of France, to whom the project was confided of conquering the kingdom of Naples from the Spaniards was, however, able to accomplish nothing in Italy, which accorded with his past and subsequent fame. Crossing the Alps at the head of 20,000 men, he penetrated, without meeting any resistance, through Lombardy and Tuscany to the ecclesiastical capital. If he could effect the reduction of the kingdom of Naples, it was imagined that the Spanish provinces in northern Italy must fall of themselves; and having therefore left the Milanese duchy unassailed behind him, he passed on from Rome to the banks of the Garigliano, where he found Alva posted with an inferior force to oppose him. The wily caution of the Spanish general and the patient valour of his troops disconcerted the impetuosity of the French and the military skill of their gallant leader; and disease had already begun to make fearful havoc in the ranks of the invaders, when Guise was recalled, by the victory of the Spaniards at St. Quentin, to defend the frontiers of France. He suddenly evacuated Italy with his army; and Paul IV. was abandoned to the mercy of the Spaniards. But such was now the superstitious veneration, which they

1557

CHAP. IX.

shared with or had imbibed from their monarch, that Paul IV. had little to fear from their success. After having reduced the pontiff to extremities, the proud Alva prostrated himself at his feet; in the name of his master and nation, abjectly implored absolution and pardon; and poured out the expression of repentance for having resisted and punished his aggressions.

The efforts of the French and Spanish arms were now wholly diverted to the frontiers of the Netherlands; and the future invasion or repose of Italy was to be decided by the operations of the war in that quarter. The question was determined by the well balanced forces of the combatants, and the consequent desire which both the French and Spanish monarchs now entertained to terminate their differences; and the Italians, who had long forgotten the hope, and had ceased to deserve the possession of independence, were at least fortunate in escaping from a renewal of former horrors. The treaty which was shortly concluded at Cateau Cambresis, appeared to terminate the long rivalry of the French and Spanish monarchies, and re-established the peace of Europe, almost all the states of which were parties to it as the allies either of Henry or of Philip. But in its consequences to Italy, this famous treaty was particularly important. To detach the duke of Parma from the French interest during the late war, Philip had already restored to him the part of his states which Charles V. had formerly seized: to confirm the fidelity of

1559

Cosmo I., afterwards grand-duke of Tuscany, he had assigned Sienna to the sceptre of the Medici, and retained only in Tuscany the small maritime district which was destined to form a Spanish province, under the title of Lo stato d'egli Presidi—the state of the garrisons. The general pacification confirmed these cessions of Philip: it also restored to the house of Savoy the greater part of its possessions, which the French and Spanish kings engaged to evacuate; and it left the kingdom of Naples and the duchy of Milan under the recognized sovereignty of Spain.

The limits and existence of the Italian states regulated by the treaty of Cateau Cambresis.

Thus the treaty of Cateau Cambresis may be considered to have finally regulated the limits and the existence of those Italian principalities and provinces which, under despotic government, whether native or foreign, had embraced almost the whole surface of the peninsula; and it left only the shadow of republican freedom to Venice, Genoa, Lucca, and—if it be worth naming—to the petty community of San Marino in the ecclesiastical states. But this same pacification is yet more remarkable, as the æra from which Italy ceased to be the theatre of contention between the monarchs of Spain and Germany and France, in their struggle for the mastery of continental Europe. Other regions were now to be scathed by their ambition, and other countries were to succeed to that inheritance of warfare and all its calamities, of which Italy had reaped, and was yet to reap, only the bitterest fruits.

Italy ceases to be the theatre of European contest;

CHAP. IX.

and remains undisturbed by wars to the close of the sixteenth century. 1559—1600

From the epoch of the treaty of Cateau Cambresis to the close of the sixteenth century, Italy remained, in one sense, in profound and uninterrupted peace. During this long period of forty-one years, her provinces were neither troubled by a single invasion of foreign armies, nor by any hostilities of importance between her own feeble and nerveless powers. But this half century presented, nevertheless, any thing rather than the aspect of public happiness and prosperity. Her wretched people enjoyed none of the real blessings of peace. Subject either to the oppressive yoke of their native despots, or to the more general influence of the arch-tyrant of Spain, they were abandoned to all the exactions of arbitrary government, and compelled to lavish their blood in foreign wars and in quarrels not their own. While France, torn by religious and civil dissensions, sank for a time from her political station among the powers of the continent, and was no longer capable of affording protection or exciting jealousy, Philip II. was left free to indulge in the peninsula all the obdurate tyranny of his nature. He was neither constrained to practice moderation by the danger of foreign interference, nor checked in his despotism by the fear of provoking a resistance which must be hopeless. The popes were interested in supporting his career of bigotry and religious persecution, the other powers of Italy crouched before him in abject submission. To feed the religious wars, in which he embarked

as a principal or an accessary, in the endeavour to crush the protestant cause in France, in the Low Countries, and in Germany, he drained Italy of her resources in money and in men.

The ruinous consumption of treasure, the fearful waste of human life, in these distant and iniquitous wars, demanded a perpetual renovation; and still Italy was the victim of fresh sacrifices to the insatiable demon of destruction. The Italians, it is true, were taught in these foreign contests to resume their post among the military of Europe. Their generals and their soldiery aspired to rival the old Spanish bands in martial glory, in talents, and in courage; and from being associated in the same ranks, became identified with them in reputation and character. But in recovering the qualities of soldiership in foreign service, they learnt not to employ their energies for the defence and the honor of their country. If the sacrifice of all the Italian blood which was shed in foreign quarrel had revived a national spirit, it would not have been expended too dearly. But while the Italian soldiery fought with the courage of freemen, they continued the slaves of a despot, and while the Italian youth were consumed in transalpine warfare, their suffering country groaned under an iron yoke, and was abandoned a prey to the unresisted assaults of the infidels. Her coasts, left without troops or defences in fortifications and shipping, were insulted and ravaged by the constant descents of the corsairs of Turkey and Barbary. Her maritime villages were burnt, her ma-

Oppression and misery of her people.

CHAP. IX.

ritime population dragged off into slavery; and her tyrants, while they denied the people the power of defending themselves, were unable or careless also to afford them protection and safety.*

Such then were the principal events of universal concern in Italy, and such was the general condition of the peninsula, from its subjugation by Charles V. to the conclusion of the sixteenth century. To detail the oppression and the miseries of the people at more length, would only be to present a vain and endless repetition of the same picture of debasement and suffering. In proceeding to offer a series of rapid sketches of the distinct and internal vicissitudes which befel the various divisions of the peninsula during the same period, I shall therefore dismiss the ungrateful subject of national humiliation and wretchedness; and shall only attempt to render a brief abstract of the leading occurrences which influenced the fortunes, and of the revolutions which changed the aspect, of the principal Italian states until the close of the century. In this manner, I shall trace in succession the fate of the Spanish dominions of Naples and Milan; the temporal

Particular and domestic fortunes of the different Italian

* This brief abstract of the general features of Italian history, from the fall of Florence to the conclusion of the sixteenth century, is gleaned from the pages of my old guide, Muratori, (Annali, A.D. 1530—1600.) I am also indebted to the judicious observations of Sismondi, (c. 123.); although that elegant writer, from the character of his splendid design, has not in an equal degree felt the same necessity that properly belongs to my humbler task, of pursuing the languid annals of Italy beyond the fall of the republics which he has celebrated.

relations of the popedom; the rise of the ducal house of Parma; the domestic affairs of the other Italian duchies, of Ferrara and Modena, of Mantua, of Savoy, and of Tuscany; and the republican annals of Genoa and Venice.

states during all this period.

NAPLES AND MILAN. 1530—1600

By the possession of the states of Naples and Milan in continental Italy, the immediate sovereignty of Spain, besides its extension to the insular kingdoms of Sicily and Sardinia, was established over the fairest portion of the peninsula. In all these dependencies, sufficient in themselves, by their population and the advantages of position and fertility with which nature has blessed them, to have constituted a powerful monarchy, the influence of the Spanish administration was fatally displayed. During the seventy years embraced in this chapter, the government of the viceroys of Naples exhibited all the evils, which intolerable impositions, and a total ignorance of the most simple principles of political economy, could inflict upon a people. The researches of Giannone have led him to the declaration, that it is perfectly incredible what enormous sums were continually extorted from the unhappy Neapolitans, by the fourteen viceroys and lieutenants, who successively governed the kingdom during the long reign of Philip II. But the blind oppression exercised by these men, and their gross errors of policy, were even more mischievous than their own mere rapacity, or the craving demands of the court of Madrid. Their absurd and iniquitous monopolies paralyzed commerce,

Oppressive character and ruinous influence of the Spanish administration in these states.

and even produced repeated famines in the midst of abundance; their tyranny systematically debased the nobility, and laboured to extirpate the last remains of popular energy; and their government, nerveless against foreign enemies and native banditti, was formidable only to its own peaceable subjects. The whole interior of the kingdom was infested by troops of robbers, who defied the arm of justice; and the sea-coasts were left so destitute of defence that, during the wars of Charles V. and his son against the Ottoman Porte, they were perpetually ravaged by the Turkish and Algerine fleets. In these frightful incursions which were conducted successively, during the greater part of the sixteenth century, by the famous corsairs Horuc and Hayradin Barbarossa, by Dragut Rayz, and by two kings of Algiers, whom the Italians call Piali and Ulucciali, whole cities and districts were desolated, and their inhabitants torn away into hopeless captivity. The sister kingdom of Sicily was a prey to the same internal misgovernment and disorders, the same ravages, and the same misery.

Meanwhile the Spanish governors of the Milanese duchy emulated the mal-administration of the viceroys of Naples; and the fortune of central Lombardy was superior only to that of the Sicilies, as its inland territory presented no points of access for the infidel pirates. From the death of Francesco Sforza in 1535, Milan became a Spanish province; for, notwithstanding his faithless negociations with the French monarchs, it never en-

tered into the serious purpose of Charles V. to part with so valuable an acquisition, still less to transfer it to his enemies; and the peace of Cateau Cambresis formally consigned it, as we have seen, to the Spanish monarchy. Even the withering influence of such a despotism as that of Philip II., succeeding to the desolation of long and ruinous wars, could not wholly destroy the obstinate fertility of the Lombard plains; but the manufactures and commerce, which had once caused them to overflow with an exuberance of wealth and population, utterly perished under the weight of impositions, in the invention of which infatuation and tyranny combined to extinguish every germ of industrious excitement.

Repeated and vain attempts to establish the Spanish inquisition in them.

While the people of Naples and Milan in general tamely submitted to these various and cruel inflictions of mis-government, it is singular and worthy of remark, that they boldly and steadily opposed one project of the Spanish court. There had seemed no limits to their endurance, until their oppressors laboured to establish the inquisition in Italy upon the same footing as in Spain; and then the nobles and the people firmly agreed in determining to resist this aggravation of their sufferings: the union of temporal and spiritual oppression, the frightful consummation of a two-fold despotism. It was, as has been observed by several writers, curious to find this resistance in a people at once so abject and so superstitious as the Neapolitans; but besides sharing in the universal horror excited in Europe by the atrocious

CHAP. IX.
NAPLES AND MILAN.
1530—1600

cruelties of the Spanish inquisition, the Neapolitans were shocked in their religious feelings, and they considered their national honor outraged, by the accusation of heresy, which was implied in the attempt to introduce that bloody tribunal into their kingdom. Under their Aragonese kings, the exercise in Naples of the inquisition, which was always of a much milder character in Italy than in Spain, had not been permitted to the papal authority; and when the Neapolitans submitted to Ferdinand the Catholic, so strong was the apprehension excited by their knowledge of the execrable system of ecclesiastical tyranny which he had cemented in Spain, that they extorted from Gonsalvo da Cordova, in the name of his master, a solemn promise that there should never be inquisition nor inquisitor within their kingdom. Ferdinand, who was some years later inflamed by his bigotry to violate this engagement, found such a ferment created by the attempt that, after sending over iniquisitors from Spain, he finally resolved, rather than encounter the risk of losing the kingdom altogether, to renounce his design and to confirm the promise of Gonsalvo.

But, before the middle of the sixteenth century, the alarming progress of the reformation, and the discovery that the new opinions had penetrated into Italy, occasioned the emperor Charles V. to resume the project, which his predecessor had abandoned; and in 1547 he wrote to the viceroy of Naples, don Pedro di Toledo,

desiring him to use his utmost endeavour peaceably to introduce the inquisition into that kingdom. Toledo executed his commands with great art; and secretly moving the pope to promulgate a brief for the occasion, he pretended that the measure emanated neither from his master nor himself, but from the zeal of his holiness for the purity of religion. But the publication of the papal instrument neither blinded the people, nor diverted their fury from its real authors. The edict itself was torn down by the populace from the doors of the cathedral of Naples; and such was the general indignation and horror of all classes of the inhabitants at its tendency, that the whole capital arose in arms. The Spanish troops in the city were furiously attacked, and obliged after much slaughter to shut themselves up with the viceroy in the castles; the Neapolitans organized a regular provisional government and levied forces for their defence; and they resolved to render obedience to don Pedro no longer. But at the same time, they endeavoured cautiously to avoid the appearance of rebellion against their sovereign; and they dispatched the prince of Salerno and a deputy from the commons to Charles, as their ambassadors firmly to remonstrate against the establishment of the inquisition. The statement which the viceroy transmitted to his master of the spirit of the people, was more effectual in promoting their cause; and the emperor, after much blood had already been shed on both sides, found it prudent to lay aside all

thoughts of persevering in his design. But he nevertheless assumed his usual high tone of authority; he insisted that the Neapolitans should unconditionally deliver up their arms, before he would declare his pleasure; and though, after their obedience to this command, he deputed the viceroy to give his promise that there should be no inquisition, he fined their city heavily, he excepted thirty-six nobles and others among the popular leaders from the general pardon, and he caused several of this number to be cruelly put to death. No farther open attempt was, however, made during the sixteenth century to introduce the inquisition into Naples; and although Philip II. eagerly desired it, such violent and alarming remonstrances from the citizens of the capital followed the bare rumour of his intentions, that he was induced to deny that he had ever entertained them.

But the views of Philip II. were more openly betrayed at Milan; and his designs, in which ferocious bigotry mingled with a detestable policy of state, were still encountered with the same resolution, which at Naples had formed so singular a contrast with the slavish submission of the people on other occasions. In the Milanese duchy, the Italian inquisition was already established; but its operations did not satisfy the relentless and gloomy severity of Philip, and in 1563 he obtained a bull from the pope, which authorized the re-modelling of that tribunal on the Spanish plan. The people of the duchy, how-

ever, prepared to resist the innovation with arms in their hands; and their governor, the duke of Sessa, who fortunately was a man of moderate and prudent character, observing their exasperation, succeeded in dissuading his sovereign from prosecuting the measure, before it had produced the same scenes of commotion and bloodshed, which had occurred sixteen years before at Naples. *

THE POPEDOM. 1530—1600

During the middle ages, the Roman pontiffs had usually shewn themselves the enemies of Italian liberty and happiness; and their political ambition and personal vices had finally hastened the ruin of Italian independence. Yet such were the natural fruits of their selfish and iniquitous policy, that the subjugation of the peninsula to foreign dominion may be numbered among the immediate causes of the decline of the papal power. After the fatal blow, which the reforma-

Decline of its splendour.

* For the internal history of Naples during all the above period, I have of course followed Giannone: Istor. Civ. di Napoli, bb. xxxii—xxxiv. ad c. 6. The whole of his account of the repeated and ineffectual attempts of the Spanish monarchs and the popes, to establish the inquisition in that kingdom and to re-model it at Milan, is extremely curious and interesting. It occupies the fifth chapter of b. xxxii.; and without reference to the general order of events in the rest of the history, is made to form, as it were, a distinct and complete episode.

In perusing Giannone's work, and particularly that part of it before us, which relates to the sixteenth century, his boldness in combating the pretensions and exposing the abuses of the papal authority is very remarkable; and it is not difficult to account for the persecution and banishment, which the great historian suffered at the instigation of the papal government of his own times.

CHAP. IX. THE POPEDOM. 1530—1600

tion gave to the ecclesiastical authority of the popes over the half of Europe, the Holy See was necessarily shorn of much of its ancient lustre. But the overwhelming influence of the Spanish sovereigns was as destructive to the temporal grandeur of the popedom in Italy, as the reformation proved to its spiritual despotism in other countries. The vain efforts of the impotent successors of Gregory VII. and Innocent III. to repress the growth of the protestant faith in the sixteenth century, belong to the ecclesiastical history of Europe: our business is only to regard the popes as Italian sovereigns; and, in this capacity, they rapidly sank almost to an equality with the other subjugated powers of the peninsula.

Succession of pontiffs.

As, by the treaty of Barcelona between Charles V. and Clement VII., the Holy See had recovered its territorial possessions, the decay of the papacy might not be immediately perceptible; and the pontificate of Paul III., who succeeded Clement in 1534, was marked by the same system of family aggrandizement, which had been the exclusive and darling policy of former popes. But Paul III. was the last of those ambitious pontiffs, who devoted the intrigues of the Roman court to the elevation of their relatives to sovereign power, and who were suffered to dismember the states of the church in favor of their own families. Julius III., who, on his death in 1549, was raised to the papal chair, was engrossed only in personal pleasures, and by his love of pomp and sensual indulgence recalled the image of the voluptuous court

CHAP. IX.

THE POPEDOM. 1530—1600

of Leo X., without its tasteful magnificence and lettered splendour. He terminated his career of debauchery in 1555; and—after a brief interval of a month, in which an ephemeral pope, Marcellus II. was elected and died,—his tiara descended upon the brows of an ecclesiastic of widely opposite character, the cardinal Giovan Piero Caraffa.

Paul IV.

This pontiff, who assumed the title of Paul IV., entered on his station with the haughty notions of its prerogatives, which were natural to his austere and impetuous spirit. Hence his efforts in concert with France, unsuccessful as they proved, to overthrow the Spanish greatness, that he might extricate the popedom from the galling state of dependance, to which the absolute ascendancy of that power in Italy had reduced it. Paul IV. is remarkable as the last pontiff who embarked in a contest, which had now become hopeless, and as the first who, giving a new direction to the policy of the Holy See, employed all the influence, the arts, and the resources of the Roman church, against the protestant cause. He had, during the pontificate of Paul III., already made himself conspicuous for his persecuting zeal. He had been the principal agent in the establishment of the inquisition at Rome, and had himself filled the office of grand inquisitor. He seated himself in the chair of St. Peter with the detestable spirit of that vocation; and the character of his pontificate responded to the violence of his temper. His mantle descended upon a

Change introduced by him in the objects of papal policy.

The popes, the persecutors of the reformed faith.

long series of his successors. Pius IV., who replaced him on his death in 1559; Pius V., who received the tiara in the following year; Gregory XIII., who was elected in 1572, and died in 1585; *Sixtus V., who next reigned until 1590*; *Urban* VII., Gregory XIV., and Innocent IX., who each filled the papal chair only a few months; and Clement VIII., whose pontificate commenced in 1592 and extended beyond the close of the century;—all pursued the same political and religious system. Resigning the hope, and perhaps the desire, of re-establishing the independence of their see, they maintained an intimate and obsequious alliance with the royal bigot of Spain; they seconded his furious persecution of the protestant faith; they fed the civil wars of the Low Countries, of France, and of Germany; and their atrocious machinations against the throne of our famous maiden queen were unceasing. In the sincerity of their zeal, the purity of their private lives, and their abandonment of family ambition, their career was perhaps less flagitious than that of their precursors in earlier ages; but they were the active instigators of all the calamities of Europe, during the last half of the sixteenth century.

In Italy, the administration of all these popes deserves principally to be noticed, for their successful efforts to crush the germs of the reformed religion. These had been thickly sown among the votaries of literature in the peninsula; but the mass of the Italian people were either too indifferent, or too deeply buried in error and abject

superstition, to be roused to the generous and anxious pursuit of eternal truth; and the Roman inquisition was readily suffered to quench the spirit of inquiry in the blood of men, whose opinions were unsupported by the sympathy of their nation. The civil government of the popes was as fatal to the prosperity of their own states, as their ecclesiastical measures were to the repose and happiness of the world. As in the Spanish provinces, ruinous monopolies extinguished industry and banished population; whole tracts of country, that had once been distinguished for fertility, were abandoned to the malaria of the desert and to eternal sterility; the Musulman corsairs were suffered to ravage the coasts; and hordes, and even armies, of banditti infested the interior.

Mal-administration of their own states.

During one short period only, the reign of disorder was suspended in the papal territories; and one only, among the popes whom I have enumerated, relieved the disgrace of his share in the work of religious persecution, by the stern virtues of his temporal administration. Sixtus V. brought from the vilest origin a natural dignity of address which graced a crown, a vigour of mind that might have fitted him to wield the sceptre of the universe, and intellectual tastes that seemed to belong to a milder character and to fairer times. During his pontificate of five years, he suppressed robbery in his states, and created a strong and vigilant police; he united impartial justice with despotic severity; he embellished Rome with many superb monuments of art; and he accu-

Brief interval of vigorous government.

Sixtus V.

Grandeur of his character.

CHAP. IX.

THE POPEDOM. 1530—1600

mulated an immense treasure by oppressive exactions. We may doubt whether he merited most the admiration or the hatred of his subjects; but the pontiffs, who had preceded, and who followed him, deserved only their hatred. After his death, the public disorders revived without mitigation; the domestic annals of the papacy resumed their insignificance; and the annexation of Ferrara to the dominion of the Holy See, which I shall presently notice, was the only occurrence that relieved their monotony until the opening of the seventeenth century.

RISE OF THE DUCAL HOUSE OF PARMA. 1545—1600

From considering the temporal affairs of the popedom, we naturally turn to observe the rise of the ducal line of Farnése at Parma, which sprang from a papal stock. I have remarked that Paul III. was the last of those ambitious popes, who rendered the interests of the Holy See subordinate to the aggrandizement of their families. The designs of Paul, himself the representative of the noble Roman house of Farnése,* were ultimately successful; since, although partially defeated during his life, they led to the establishment of his descendants on the throne of Parma and Placentia for nearly two hundred years. I have already mentioned that he gained the consent of the sacred college to alienate those states from the

* The family of Farnése were established in the province of Orvieto, where they had long possessed the castle of Farneto, their patrimony, and had followed the usual occupation of their fellow-nobles, that of condottieri. Their family produced some leaders of reputation as early as the fourteenth century.

RISE OF THE DUCAL HOUSE OF PARMA. 1545—1600

Holy See in 1545, that he might erect them into a duchy for his natural son, Pietro Luigi Farnése; and the emperor Charles V. had already some years before, to secure the support of the papacy against France, bestowed the hand of his natural daughter Margaret, widow of Alessandro de' Medici, upon Ottavio, son of Pietro Luigi and grandson of Paul III. Notwithstanding this measure, Charles V. was not subsequently, however, the more disposed to confirm to the house of Farnése the investiture of their new possessions, which he claimed as part of the Milanese duchy; and he soon evinced no friendly disposition towards his own son-in-law, Ottavio.

Pietro Luigi Farnése, son of pope Paul III., the first duke.

Pietro Luigi, the first duke of Parma, proved himself, by his extortions, his cruelties, and his debaucheries, scarcely less detestable than any of the ancient tyrants of Lombardy. He thus provoked a conspiracy and insurrection of the nobles of Placentia, where he resided; and he was assassinated by them at that place in 1547, after a reign of only two years. The city was immediately seized in the imperial name by Gonzaga, governor of Milan, who, if he did not instigate it, was at least privy to their design; and Paul III., besides his grief at the death of a son whom, notwithstanding his atrocious vices, he tenderly loved, suffered an aggravation of sorrow by the loss of so valuable a possession. To deter the emperor from appropriating Parma also to himself, he could devise no other expedient than altogether to retract his grant from his family, and to re-

His assassination.

CHAP. IX.

RISE OF THE DUCAL HOUSE OF PARMA. 1545—1600

Reverses of Ottavio, his son and successor.

occupy that city for the Holy See, whose rights he conceived that the emperor would not venture to invade. Ottavio Farnése thus found himself deprived of one part of his inheritance by the treachery of his father-in-law, the emperor, and of the remainder by the hazardous policy of his grandfather, the pope. The death of Paul, which shortly followed, seemed at first to complete the ruin of his fortunes; but that event, on the contrary, curiously paved the way for their revival. By the numerous creations of cardinals, which Paul III. had made during his long pontificate, he had filled the sacred college with his relatives and creatures; and the Farnése party, who after his death still commanded a majority in the conclave, by raising Julius III. to the tiara, obtained the restitution of Parma to Ottavio from the gratitude of the new pope.

The prosperity of the ducal house of Farnése was not yet securely established. The emperor still retained Placentia, and Julius III. soon forgot the services of that family. In 1551, the pope leagued with Charles V. to deprive the duke Ottavio of the fief which he had restored to him. Farnése was thus reduced, as we have seen, to place himself under the protection of the French; and this measure, and the indecisive war which followed, became his salvation. He still preserved his throne when Charles V. terminated his reign; and one of the first acts of Philip II., when Italy was menaced by the invasion of the duke de Guise, was to win him over from the

RISE OF THE DUCAL HOUSE OF PARMA. 1545—1600

The grandeur of the house of Farnése established by Alessandro, the famous prince of Parma.

French alliance, and to secure his gratitude, by yielding Placentia again to him. But a Spanish garrison was still left in the citadel of that place; and it was only the brilliant military career of Alessandro Farnése, the celebrated prince of Parma, son of duke Ottavio, which finally consummated the greatness of his family. Entering the service of Philip II., Alessandro gradually won the respect and favor of that gloomy monarch; and at length, in 1585, as a reward for his achievements, the Spanish troops were withdrawn from his father's territories. The duke Ottavio closed his life in the following year; but Alessandro never took possession of his throne. He died at the head of the Spanish armies in the Low Countries in 1592; and his son Ranuccio quietly commenced his reign over the duchy of Parma and Placentia, under the double protection of the Holy See and the monarchy of Spain.

FERRARA AND MODENA. 1539—1600

The loss which the papal states sustained, by the alienation of Parma and Placentia, was repaired, before the end of the sixteenth century, by the acquisition of a duchy little inferior in extent to those territories:—that of Ferrara. After the death, in 1534, of its duke Alfonso I. who, during the fatal wars of Italy, had sustained so many reverses by the hostility of successive pontiffs, there is little to interest us in the annals of the house of Este. The long reign of Ercole II., the successor of Alfonso, which extended to the year 1559, was remarkable only for his unim-

CHAP. IX.

FERRARA AND MODENA. 1530—1600

portant share in the wars anterior to the peace of Cateau Cambresis, and for the abject submission to Philip II., with which he was finally permitted to expiate his attachment to the French interests. His son Alfonso II., the obsequious servant of Spain, has acquired his only distinction,—an odious celebrity in literary history,—by his persecution of the unhappy Tasso. With the death of this feeble prince without issue in 1597, terminated the legitimate Italian branch of the ancient and illustrious line of Este. But there remained an illegitimate representative of his house, whom he designed for his successor; don Cesare da Este, the grandson of Alfonso I. by a natural son of that duke. The inheritance of Ferrara and Modena had passed in the preceding century to bastards, without opposition from the popes, the feudal superiors of the former duchy. But the imbecile character of don Cesare now encouraged the reigning pontiff, Clement VIII., to declare that all the ecclesiastical fiefs of the house of Este reverted, of right, to the Holy See on the extinction of the legitimate line. The papal troops, on the death of Alfonso II., invaded the Ferrarese state; and Cesare suffered himself to be terrified by their approach into an ignominious and formal surrender of that duchy to the Holy See. By the indifference of the emperor Rodolph II., he was permitted to retain the investiture of the remaining possessions of his ancestors: the duchies of Modena and Reggio, over which, as

Extinction of the legitimate line of Este.

Ferrara annexed to the Holy See.

imperial and not papal fiefs, the pope could not decently assert any right. *

FERRARA AND MODENA. 1530—1600

Decay of that capital and duchy.

In passing beneath the papal yoke, the duchy of Ferrara which, under the government of the house of Este, had been one of the most fertile provinces of Italy, soon became a desert and marshy waste. The capital itself lost its industrious population and commercial riches; its architectural magnificence crumbled into ruins; and its modern aspect † retains no trace of that splendid court, in which literature and art repaid the fostering protection of its sovereigns by reflecting lustre on their heads. Modena, to which the seat of the house of Este was transferred, flourished by the decay of Ferrara, and assumed a new air of industry, and wealth, and elegance.

The seat of the house of Este transferred to Modena.

MANTUA. 1530—1600

The contemporary annals of the houses of Este and Gonzaga are equally barren of interest; and the only occurrence in the fortunes of the dukes of Mantua, which I am called upon to notice in the period before us, is the annexation of the territory of Montferrat to their patrimonial inheri-

* Muratori, Annali, A. D. 1530—1597, *passim*. See also the second volume of his Antichità Estensi:—the favorite study of the indefatigable antiquary.

† "Ferrara was built for more than 100,000 inhabitants, and now is reduced to one fourth of that number. Some of the streets are covered with grass and dunghills, the ditches are mantled with green corruption, the very churches, which often flourish amid desolation, are falling into decay. Yet melancholy as the city looks now, every lover of Italian poetry must view with affection the retreat of an Ariosto, a Tasso, a Guarini." Forsyth, Remarks on Italy, 3d Ed. vol. ii. p. 107.

CHAP. IX.

MANTUA. 1530—1600

tance. On the death of the last marquis of Montferrat without male heirs in 1533, Federigo II. of Mantua claimed his states in right of his duchess, the eldest sister of the deceased prince. Montferrat was decidedly a feminine fief; but the emperor Charles V., who had seized the marquisate, suffered three years to elapse, before he was induced to recognize the just pretensions of Gonzaga, and to bestow the investiture upon him. But in 1536 Federigo at last united its coronet to his ducal crown; and from this epoch to the end of the century, no vicissitude either of good or evil varied the obscure and sluggish rule of that prince and his successors over Mantua and Montferrat.

Annexation of Montferrat to that duchy.

SAVOY. 1450—1600

The fortunes of the house of Savoy were not so monotonous and equable. From the decease of Louis, the second duke of that family, who had survived, as I have formerly observed,* beyond the middle of the fifteenth century, (to 1465), there is little to merit attention in the affairs of Savoy and Piedmont, until his sceptre fell into the hands of his unfortuate descendant, Charles III. During this period of forty years, six princes, almost all of insignificant character, successively wore the ducal crown, without illustrating their names or aggrandizing their power by any remarkable achievement. But the reign of Charles III. which commenced in 1504, introduced a new æra of humiliation and calamities for his dynasty and his people. For thirty years

Unfortunate reign of the duke Charles III.

* See p. 131 of this volume.

after his accession, in the long wars of Italy, he was permitted to preserve an inglorious neutrality; for which, during the gigantic contest between the houses of France and Austria at least, he was principally indebted to his common relationship with both the rival monarchs. Louise of Savoy, mother of Francis I., was his own sister; and the empress of Charles V. was the sister of his duchess, Beatrice of Portugal. The contending forces of his nephew and his brother-in-law alternately traversed his states; but these sovereigns seemed for several years by mutual consent to abstain from ravaging them, or from reducing him to take a decisive part in their quarrel.

Spoliation of his states.

But some injurious demands of Francis I. upon the Savoyard territories, in his mother's name and his own, gradually alienated Charles III. from his connection with that monarch, and prepared the way for the rupture and the French invasion which, in 1535, deprived the house of Savoy of almost all its dominions. From this epoch, for twenty-five years, with few intervals of repose, Piedmont became the principal theatre of war between the French and imperialists, and was successively devastated by both parties with frightful violence, as the balance of victory inclined to either cause. Spoiled alike by his two relatives, by the open enemy and the selfish ally, Charles III. was equally ruined by the success of the one and the other. The imperialists seized and retained whatever they could save or wrest from the French; and to augment the misfortunes of

CHAP. IX.
SAVOY. 1450—1600

the duke, the valuable city of Geneva, which had long acknowledged the sovereignty of his house, embraced the reformed faith, spurned his efforts to restrain its exercise, and throwing off the yoke

1535

of Savoy for ever, established her republican independence. Of all the states of his ancestors, Nice was almost the sole possession which remained to him; and his relief of that city, which was besieged by land and sea in 1543 by the combined forces of the French and the Turks, was the only successful enterprise of his life.

His son, Emmanuel Philibert

On the death of this unfortunate prince in 1553, there remained to his only son and successor, Emmanuel Philibert, little more than the ducal title and his own good sword.* Preceding the famous prince of Parma in a similar career of military glory, he had entered the Spanish service, and by his eminent talents so won the confidence of Charles V. that he was entrusted, at the early age of twenty-five years, with the supreme command in the Low Countries; and his subsequent victory at St. Quentin prepared the way for the re-establishment of his house. The peace of Cateau Cambresis, which his successes enabled Philip II. in some measure to dictate to France, restored to him the greater part of the dominions which Francis I. had wrested from his father; but the French were still permitted to retain Turin and several other important places in Pied-

* The device which the young prince appended to the cross of Savoy, spoke the fallen fortunes of his house and his own brave spirit:—SPOLIATIS ARMA SUPERSUNT.

mont, while the ingratitude of Philip II. withheld from him Vercelli and Asti.

When the new duke of Savoy took possession of his states, he found the whole country in ruins: agriculture abandoned, commerce and finances destroyed, cities depopulated, and foreign garrisons bristling in the heart of his territories. In the general anarchy, the nobles had forgotten obedience and assumed a petty independence; and the people were borne down by long wars and foreign oppression, and broken in spirit: their ancient attachment to their sovereigns was succeeded by indifference, their national feelings were extinguished in their private miseries. But in their prince was fortunately blended all the pacific wisdom of the consummate statesman, with the more dazzling qualities of the hero; and if Amadeus VIII., the first duke of Savoy, was the founder of the grandeur of his house, to Emmanuel Philibert belongs the superior reputation of having retrieved its fall, and restored and augmented its power. Renouncing the vain passion for martial glory, he laboured incessantly, for twenty years after the partial restitution of his states, to preserve them in peace, to consolidate their union and strength, and to secure them against future assaults. Nor were his efforts unsuccessful. His reign was disturbed by no hostilities; his dominions recovered their prosperity, his subjects enjoyed the blessings of justice and order; and if his power was absolute, it was at least exerted for the welfare of a people who had

Restores the fortunes of his house.

His glorious and pacific reign.

CHAP. IX.

SAVOY. 1450—1600

forgotten, or who had never learnt to be free, and whose contentment was disturbed by few aspirations after liberty. The first care of the duke was sedulously to repair and improve the fortresses of Savoy and Piedmont, and to increase their number; his next project was to create a militia in both those provinces, by which he obtained a well disciplined national infantry of twenty thousand men, and raised the people in their own estimation; and, finally, during the civil distractions of France, he adroitly succeeded, in 1562 and 1574, in obtaining from Francis II. and Henry III. the cession of all the places in Piedmont, which had been unjustly withheld from him.

The dominions of the house of Savoy were now recovered; their strength was increased, and their consolidation perfected. Emmanuel Philibert passed the residue of his reign in encouraging agriculture, in promoting commerce and the useful arts, in improving his revenues, and in patronizing learning. He revived the university of Turin and founded several endowments; by his exertions the silk-worm and mulberry were introduced into Piedmont, and shortly produced large returns of wealth; other manufactures were also established; and an active maritime trade was opened at Nice. When this enlightened prince *

* Emmanuel Philibert encircled his throne with all the magnificence of a chivalric and brilliant court; but it was rather from policy than taste, that he attached a numerous train of nobles and courtiers to his person. He chose no

and benefactor of his country terminated his life in 1580, in the vigour of intellect and at the age of only fifty-two years, the possession of the marquisate of Saluzzo was alone wanting to complete the security of his dominions, and to exclude the French altogether from Italy.

Charles Emmanuel I.

With a less pacific temper and with more rashness, his son and successor, Charles Emmanuel I., devoted his reign to the attainment of that object. In 1548, on the extinction of the sovereign branch of the family of Saluzzo, Henry II. of France had taken possession of this marquisate and annexed it, by a very doubtful title, to his dominions as a lapsed fief of his crown. Emmanuel Philibert had seen, with well-founded inquietude, the French monarchs still possessed of a territory, by which they commanded the gates of Italy; and his son found the furious civil wars, which were now consuming the strength of France, too favorable an occasion to be lost, for asserting the plausible claim of his house to the reversion of the marquisate of Saluzzo. He accordingly possessed himself with ease of that territory in 1588. He afterwards, also, in concert with Philip II., engaged in the war against Henry IV., and was included in the peace of Vervins in 1598. But three years intervened between that treaty and the final settlement of his differences with Henry IV. for the possession of the contested marquisate; and

favorites among them, and was no dupe to flatterers. His usual asseveration betrayed his experience of a palace: "Parola di cavaliere, e non di cortigiano."

CHAP. IX.

SAVOY. 1450—1600

Succeeds in closing the gates of Italy against the French. 1601

it was not until after the opening of the seventeenth century, that the French monarch ceded that territory to him in exchange for the county of Bresse in Savoy. Henry IV. thus consented to close against himself the passes of the Alps; and the dukes of Savoy, by the loss of a part of their ultramontane possessions, became more exclusively Italian sovereigns. From this epoch, also, Italy ceased to apprehend the renewal of those invasions from France, which had been attended with so many horrors, and associated with all the shame and the suffering of the people of the peninsula. *

TUSCANY. 1530—1600

The last of the ducal dynasties of the peninsula, whose elevation and fortunes demand notice at the period before us, is that of Tuscany; and we have now rapidly to follow the train of events, by which a single despotism overspread the fair face of that province: the cradle of Italian poesy, the stronghold of Italian independence, the brilliant theatre of freedom, of literature, and of the arts, before the kindred elements of political and intellectual greatness were buried in a common ruin.

Government of Florence after the extinction of the republic.

In the last chapter, we have observed the extinction of the Florentine republic; the composition of a balia of the creatures of pope Clement VII.; and the appointment by that body of Alessandro de' Medici to an absolute and hereditary authority

* For this abstract of the affairs of the house of Savoy, I have followed Guichenon, Hist. Genealogique de la Maison de Savoie, vol. ii. ad p. 351; besides occasional reference to Denina.

over the fallen state, with the title of doge or duke. An oligarchical senate of forty-eight persons, and a larger council of the same character, all the members of which were nominated for life, were at the same time created, to supply the vain image of constitutional government: but Alessandro was the despot of Florence.

Alessandro de' Medici, the first duke or doge.

The imperial pleasure confirmed his authority; and he secured his power by the ordinary means of a tyrant, conscious of the detestation of his subjects. He maintained a large body of foreign mercenaries; he erected a citadel in Florence to curb the disaffection of the people; and he indulged himself and his myrmidons in the commission, against the domestic peace of families and the rights of the community, of every crime which could add poignant insult to the usual evils of oppression. His intolerable excesses multiplied the number of exiles of the principal families of Florence, with whom the other states of Italy were now filled; and many even of those men, who had basely laboured to elevate his house upon the ruins of their country's liberty, found it impossible to exist under the tyranny which was the work of their own hands. An ineffectual appeal was made to the emperor, after the death of Clement VII.,* to induce him to withdraw his

His tyranny and excesses.

* One of the last acts of Clement VII. seemed to consummate the grandeur of his house. This was the marriage, in 1533, of his youthful relative, the too famous Catherine de' Medici, into the royal family of France; a degradation by which Francis I. strove to purchase the friendship of the pope. Catherine, destined to give birth to three of the worst

CHAP. IX.

TUSCANY. 1530—1600

protection from his unworthy and odious creature. Besides Filippo Strozzi, the representative of that ancient family, and the most wealthy private individual in Europe, the Ridolfi, the Salviati and others,—names once among the most illustrious in the Florentine republic,—joined in this remonstrance; and even the cardinal Ippolito de' Medici united his exertions against his infamous cousin. But Alessandro succeeded in removing the cardinal by poison; and when Charles V. admitted the duke and his enemies to a public hearing at Naples in 1536, he was induced by his hatred of the republican cause, and his knowledge of the partiality of the Florentines towards France, not only to confirm his protection to Alessandro, but to fulfil the promise which he had formerly given to Clement VII., by bestowing on him the hand of his natural daughter.

By this conduct of the emperor, the Florentines lost all hope of deliverance from their execrable tyrant; but an act of private treachery procured for them that relief, which was denied by the justice or commiseration of the arbiter of Italy. Lorenzino de' Medici, the representative of the collateral branch of that family, (which descended

sovereigns of France, and to prove herself the scourge of that unhappy kingdom, was the daughter of Lorenzo (son of the last Piero), and the only surviving legitimate descendant of the great Cosmo. But if Clement VII. hoped by this marriage to cement the strength of his family, his expectation was vain. Catherine detested alike the bastard Alessandro and his collateral heirs; and her court was long the focus of machinations against them.

from the brother of the great Cosmo) a young man of considerable intellectual acquirements, but of abandoned morals, was the bosom companion of the duke and the minister of his infamous debaucheries. Whatever were his secret motives, —whether, as the next heir of Alessandro, he hoped to succeed to his power, or was really stimulated by the desire of immortalizing himself as the deliverer of his country,—he resolved to assassinate the duke.

His assassination by his cousin Lorenzino. 1537

Under pretence of having secured for him an assignation with a lady of great beauty, a married woman and a near relative of his own, he induced Alessandro to quit the palace one night, and to repair unattended and disguised to his house. There, in a private and remote apartment, he left him, apparently for the purpose of escorting the lady to the spot; but while the duke, who had thrown himself on a couch, was unsuspiciously awaiting his return, he suddenly re-entered the room followed by an assassin, and plunged a dagger into the bosom of the libertine prince. The wound was mortal, but Alessandro nevertheless made a desperate struggle with his murderer, until, as they grappled on the couch, the attendant of Lorenzino deliberately completed the deed of horror, by cutting the throat of the duke. The plan of Lorenzino had been laid with such secrecy and ability, that the murder was accomplished without alarm; but he had no sooner dispatched his victim than, losing all presence of mind, he neither attempted to proclaim the death of the

CHAP. IX.

1530—1600

tyrant, and to raise the city by the cry of liberty, nor to possess himself of the vacant government. He precipitately fled from the city, and joined the exiles at Venice; and before, in their surprise, they could take effectual measures for availing themselves of his act, the opportunity for restoring the republic was lost.

By the Florentine exiles, and by all the lovers of extinguished freedom in the peninsula, the assassination of the tyrant of Florence was applauded in unmeasured terms, as an act of the highest republican virtue; and Lorenzino de' Medici himself was eulogized and sung as a new Brutus, the saviour of his country. Some modern writers also have not been ashamed to hesitate between praise and reprobation of this deed. But its atrocious perfidy is fitted to create only the sentiment of unmingled abhorrence; and the acknowledged previous depravity of Lorenzino forbids us from attributing even the incentive of a mistaken principle of duty, to the corrupted sensualist and the base pander of another's lusts. There is nothing more dangerous to acknowledge or more improbable in itself, than the compatibility of political virtue with personal iniquity; nor should the pure cause of freedom ever be sullied by association with a crime, at which every better feeling of our nature revolts. *

* Lorenzino de' Medici reaped the merited fruits of his shocking treachery. Pursued by the resentment of the emperor and the successor of Alessandro, and haunted by the perpetual fear of death, he continued his flight from Italy into

Except in her deliverance from his personal excesses, Florence derived no advantage from the murder of the duke Alessandro. The leading members of the oligarchical senate, among whom the historian Guicciardini had acted too conspicuous a part for his own fair fame, were conscious of having provoked the hatred of their fellow citizens, and dreaded the re-establishment of a popular government. They conducted themselves with great ability; they secured the city with the soldiery of the late tyrant, before they permitted the news of his death to transpire; and they raised to the supreme power the youthful Cosmo de' Medici: son of Giovanni, the celebrated captain of the black bands, and, after Lorenzino, next representative of the collateral branch of the sovereign house.

Cosmo de' Medici, his successor;

This young man was living in retirement near Florence; and Guicciardini and his party, judging of him only by his inexperience, doubted not that they should be permitted to engross all the powers of government in his name. But in this expectation they were bitterly mistaken. Cosmo was no sooner installed in his new dignity than, with equal ambition and dissimulation and energy, he determined to rule without them. His election

Turkey, and afterwards passed into France, from whence he at last ventured to return to Venice. But neither his constant watchfulness, nor the obscurity in which he endeavoured to shroud himself, could save him; and after eleven years of harassing exile, he was finally assassinated at Venice, by order of the grand-duke Cosmo I.

was confirmed by the emperor, who placed garrisons in the Florentine fortresses under pretence of supporting him; and when the exiles made a last and generous effort in arms to recover freedom for their country, with the aid of Francis I., they were utterly defeated by the imperial forces in the service of Cosmo, and the greater number of them fell into his power. They experienced no mercy: all who were most illustrious by their personal characters and the names which they bore, were consigned to the rack and the sword of the executioner; and Filippo Strozzi, the most distinguished among them, whose fate was longest in suspence, perished the last of these victims in the cause of Florentine liberty.

triumphs over the last effort of the republican exiles, and treats them with merciless cruelty.

1538

The first cruel triumph of Cosmo was over his enemies; his next, a worthy consummation of ingratitude, was the expulsion of his friends, the artificers of his power. He dismissed them from all offices of authority, successively to terminate their lives in mortification and disgrace. Having thus removed every obstacle to his solitary despotism, Cosmo devoted the long residue of his life to the extension of his dominions. He never was able to free his throne from the chains, with which Charles V. and his son continued to encircle it; for it was by foreign protection alone, that he maintained his usurpation against the general hatred of his subjects. But he persevered in the objects of his base ambition, until all Tuscany, except the republic of Lucca and the province of

He acquires the sovereignty of Sienna.

the Spanish garrisons, was consigned to his government. His most important acquisition was the state of Sienna. For the reduction of that republic, after its revolt against Spanish oppression, and its alliance with France, Charles V. was principally indebted to the skilful exertions of the duke, and the army which he created; though Cosmo never himself appeared at the head of his troops. Charles V. however retained the possession which Cosmo had won; and it was only in 1557, two years after this successful and iniquitous war, that Philip II. resigned to his dependant the prize of Sienna.—The annals of that ferocious and turbulent republic offer, perhaps, few such splendid and deeply attractive associations, as those which bind our interest and sympathy to the fortunes of Florence; but the last struggle of Sienna, a struggle of hopeless and desperate heroism against foreign oppressors, at least merits an honorable record, and ennobles the last days of her commonwealth.

Fall of that republic.

Cosmo I., created grand-duke of Tuscany. 1569

Cosmo I. had hitherto reigned under no other character, than the ambiguous one of chief or prince of the Florentine state. But twelve years after his acquisition of Sienna, he at length prevailed on pope Pius V. to bestow on him the title of grand-duke of Tuscany. His right to this new dignity was, however, for some time contested by the other Italian princes; and it was only in 1575, that an imperial investiture to the same effect, granted to his son by Maximilian II., secured the universal recognition of the Medici

CHAP. IX.

TUSCANY. 1530—1600

among the sovereign houses of Europe. The reign of Cosmo had been sullied by numerous acts of atrocious cruelty, ingratitude, and perfidy, which were poorly relieved by his passionate taste for literature and art. There is sometimes retribution on earth, even for successful crime: a fearful domestic tragedy embittered the latter years of Cosmo, and thickened the gloom of that self-bereavement, in which he had left himself, by spurning his early friends and supporters from his side. Two of his sons perished under circumstances of such mystery and shame, that their fate was sedulously enveloped in an obscurity, which the public eye never entirely penetrated. But it was believed that one of them, don Giovanni, fell by the hand of his brother, and that the miserable father sternly revenged his death by plunging his dagger in the heart of the guilty fratricide, don Garcias;—even in the arms of his other parent, Eleonora di Toledo, who sank into her grave under this accumulation of horrors.

Fearful tragedy in his family.

On the death of Cosmo I., he was succeeded by his eldest son Francesco: a prince who, without his talents, inherited his perfidious cruelty, and was the slave of licentious passions, to which he had himself been a stranger. The discovery, in 1578, of a last conspiracy of the partizans of liberty at Florence, to overthrow an usurpation which no lapse of time could legalize, gave occasion to display all the merciless spirit of the grand-duke. A great number of persons were executed; nor was the appetite of Francesco for blood thus

His son, the grand-duke Francesco. 1575

satiated. Against the distinguished exiles who, having in 1537 escaped the fate of Filippo Strozzi and his associates, still survived, and to whom Catherine de' Medici had given refuge at the French court, the grand-duke employed a regular system of extermination. He took the most expert Italian assassins into his pay, and sent them to his ambassador at Paris. To aid the work of the dagger, he supplied that agent of murder with subtle poisons, of which, under pretence of making chemical experiments, Cosmo I. had established a manufacture in his palace; and he set a price of four thousand ducats upon the head of each of the enemies of his house. It was in vain that the wretched exiles, discovering their danger by the assassination of the first victim of this infernal plot, dispersed from Paris and endeavoured to bury themselves in remote provinces of France and other countries. The emissaries of the grand duke, rendered indefatigable by avarice, were successful in dogging their flight; and permitted them neither escape nor repose until the last of them had passed from a violent death into the quiet of the grave.

His atrocious system of assassinations.

The only remaining event of importance in the reign of Francesco was his marriage with Bianca Capello, celebrated for her adoption by the republic of Venice. The whole story of this lady is a romance; but a romance rounded with a tale of murder. The daughter of a nobleman of Venice, she had inspired a young Florentine with an ardent attachment which, imagining him to be a

His marriage with Bianca Capello, "daughter of the Venetian republic."

1579

Romantic story of that lady.

CHAP. IX.

TUSCANY. 1530—1600

man of birth, she had suffered herself to return. On discovering his humble station, she implored him not to complete the ruin of their common fortunes by persisting in his suit. But she could not refuse him a last adieu and a nocturnal assignation; and on attempting to regain her father's palace, she found the gates already closed. The first imprudence led to a greater; she threw herself into a gondola with her lover, accompanied him to Florence, and there married him. Thenceforth she lived in obscurity, until the duke Francesco saw her by chance, was inflamed with a violent passion by her beauty, and made his intention to reconcile her with her family the pretext of frequent visits. Her husband was invited to court, loaded with advancement,—and assassinated. The grand-duke then shortly became a widower. He retained Bianca in his palace, and sent ambassadors to Venice to demand her hand; and the senate, desirous to honor the future grand-duchess with a fitting preparation for a throne, adopted her by the title of "daughter of the Venetian republic." Her marriage with the grand-duke was then concluded; but not without the violent opposition of his brother, the cardinal Ferdinando. After some years, however, the indignation of the cardinal, at the unworthy alliance of his house with the dissolute child of a Venetian noble, appeared to have subsided; he was reconciled with the ducal pair and invited them to a banquet; but it was only to administer poison to them both.

The grand-duke and his duchess poisoned by his brother, the cardinal Ferdinando. 1587

Reign of Ferdinando, grand-duke of Tuscany.

Ferdinando de' Medici, on succeeding to the crown, which he had compassed by treachery and fratricide, abjured his priestly vows that he might be at liberty to marry. But, notwithstanding his personal depravity, he was not without eminent talents for government. He assiduously promoted commerce and maritime enterprise among his subjects; and he aspired to deliver his throne of Tuscany from a long and oppressive dependance on the Spanish monarchy. With this view, he concluded and maintained a close alliance with Henry IV. of France; but, after the treaty with Savoy by which that monarch, at the opening of the new century, excluded himself from communication with Italy, the grand-duke of Tuscany necessarily fell again under the Spanish yoke, from which he had laboured to extricate his dominions.

Lucca.

Though one state of Tuscany continued, during the whole of the sixteenth century, to enjoy the forms of a free constitution, such was the insignificance in which its fortunes were plunged that, in the annals of the times, we are scarcely reminded of its existence. The solitary republic of Lucca founded the best hope of escape from utter subjugation in an obscurity from which she only once emerged. For shelter against the secret machinations and open assaults of Cosmo I., her rulers, feeling their weakness, had recourse to intrigues in the imperial councils, and succeeded by enormous bribes to the ministers of Charles V. in obtaining the protection of that monarch. From

CHAP. IX.

TUSCANY. 1530—1600

this epoch a few uninteresting domestic convulsions alone varied her condition. In the struggle between the aristocratical and democratical factions in her councils, the former finally prevailed, and in 1556 obtained the enactment of a law (called the Legge Martiniana, from its author, the gonfalonier Martino Bernardino), which indirectly but securely restricted eligibility for all offices of state within narrow limits, and thus established at Lucca, as the closing of the great council had anciently at Venice, a sovereign and hereditary oligarchy.*

Establishment of the oligarchy of that republic.

In the condition of Italy under a number of petty despotisms, an oligarchical government was perhaps the only form, under which a republic could still preserve its existence. The fierce independence of a democracy could ill amalgamate with the mingled pride and servility of the tyrants of the peninsula, who were themselves little more than the slaves of a foreign potentate. Of the only three republics of the middle ages which were still permitted to survive, Venice needed no change to assimilate her mockery of a free constitution with the spirit of the age; the new institutions of Lucca were a milder conformity with a similar system: and even the stormy commonwealth of Genoa had already subsided into obedience to an organized and sovereign aris-

GENOA. 1530—1600

* Bernardo Segni, Stor. Fior. b. v. p. 142, and Scipione Ammirato, Istor. Fior. b. xxxi. p. 420:—passim, to the close of both these works; after which see Raguccio Galluzzi, Stor. del Gran Ducato di Toscana, from its commencement to vol. iv. p. 57.

GENOA. 1530—1600

Aristocratical constitutions promoted by Andrea Doria.

tocracy. When Andrea Doria restored the political existence of his republic, he laboured, doubtless with the zeal and discretion of true patriotism, to establish, in concert with his friends, the best constitution of which the times were susceptible. To prevent the revival of those feuds, which had inflicted such cruel wounds upon the public happiness, the very names of the Adorni and Fregosi were suppressed, and those families were incorporated into others. With similar views, the laws were repealed which excluded the old nobility from offices of magistracy; and a curious arrangement was adopted to admit all the families of any consideration in Genoa, with equal rights within the same circle of aristocracy.

It had always been customary for the powerful Genoese houses to augment their strength by adopting inferior families, who assumed their names and arms, and in return for protection, engaged in all their quarrels. This ancient practice, the nurse of faction, was now rendered conducive to a better object. Twenty-eight houses, or *alberghi* as they were termed, were named, in one or other of which all citizens of substance and of ancient republican descent were admitted without distinction of parties: care being taken to mingle Guelfs and Ghibelins, nobles and plebeians, partizans of the Adorni and adherents of the Fregosi, in every albergo. Thus was created a sovereign aristocracy, which formally raised to the rank of a gentleman every landed proprietor in the maritime territory of Liguria, and every

CHAP. IX.

GENOA. 1530—1600

citizen of Genoa, who could prove the purity of his republican ancestry, and was in a condition to contribute to the necessities of the state. In this new order by hereditary right, was vested exclusively the government of the republic; and every gentleman took his seat by rotation in the grand council of four hundred, which was renewed annually. The grand council elected a senate of a hundred members, also for one year; and a new doge and signiory of eight were similarly chosen every two years, with other magistrates.

This constitution of 1528, which, at the moment when the very existence of the republic was threatened with dissolution, fixed its independence and gave a great number of citizens a share in the government, was at first received with transports of joy. It covered ancient dissensions with oblivion, and for nearly twenty years gave uninterrupted repose to Genoa. But in the process of time, new causes of dissatisfaction arose. The lower people, found themselves excluded from all share in the national representation, and desired again to exchange their subjection to the aristocracy, for the old popular system, even with all its attendant convulsions and anarchy. Nor were there wanting some restless and turbulent spirits, to whom the dependence of the republic upon the emperor, and the great influence of Doria and his family, were galling and obnoxious. The talents and virtues of Andrea himself commanded admiration and love; his tried disinterestedness and generous devotion to his country's rights were

Popular discontents.

above all suspicion. But as he advanced in years, his domestic affections fondly centered in a grand-nephew, Giannettino Doria, whom he designed for his heir, and made it his passion to indulge and aggrandize. As Andrea's infirmities encreased, he entrusted Giannettino with the command of his gallies in the imperial service, and suffered him gradually to assume that ascendancy in the councils of the state, which he had himself deservedly enjoyed. He was unconscious how little his grand-nephew's character resembled his own; but the Genoese observed with gloomy forebodings the ambition and arrogance of that young man; and the aristocracy, in particular, were stung by his overbearing insolence and dangerous pretensions.

Conspiracy of Fiesco. 1547

While encreasing jealousy and suspicion were rankling in the public mind, a young nobleman, who, under many qualities which secured the popular esteem, concealed an audacious and inordinate ambition, was encouraged by the discontent of the people to attempt the destruction of the aristocracy, of the Doria, and of the Spanish authority over the republic. This was the famous Giovanni Ludovico de' Fieschi, count of Lavagna. Inheriting the ancient enmity of his noble house towards that of Doria, he was particularly wounded in his pride by the presumption of Giannettino, in endeavouring to convert his great-uncle's influence into an hereditary dignity; and he thought the first rank in the state not an object

CHAP. IX.
GENOA. 1530—1600

of too difficult attainment for his own illustrious birth and daring aspirations. Assuring himself secretly of the future support of France, of the pope, Paul III., and of his son the duke of Parma, against the imperial vengeance, he induced many citizens of the old popular party to embrace and second his design.

The immediate and sanguinary purpose of this desperate conspiracy was to assassinate the Doria and to seize the city; and Fiesco, under pretence of fitting out some gallies, which he had procured from the pope, to cruize at his own cost against the Turkish infidels, introduced a body of his retainers and of hired soldiery within the walls. Privately assembling this armed force with the band of conspirators in his palace, he invited all the citizens, whom he considered most disaffected to the government, to an evening entertainment. When his company had entered and the doors were closed and guarded, he then communicated his project to the astonished assembly; and setting before them in a passionate harangue the danger in which the republic stood from the power of the Doria and the protection accorded to them by the emperor, he demanded for his undertaking a co-operation, which none of his guests, surrounded as they were by his armed retainers, dared to refuse. Those among them who disapproved of the enterprise, were yet constrained to engage in it; and in the dead of night, Fiesco sallied at their head into the slumbering

CHAP. IX.

GENOA. 1530—1600

city. With one detachment, he himself undertook the attack of the harbour, in which Doria's gallies lay dismantled; while his brothers and other leaders were entrusted with the seizure of the different gates and strongholds of the city. In a short time every assault had succeeded; all Genoa was filled with tumult and uproar; and at the cry of "Fiesco and liberty!" many of the populace, to whom the leader and his cause were alike dear, rose in arms and joined the insurgents. The palace of the Doria was without the walls; but Giannettino, roused by the tumult, hastened to the city, and met his death at one of the gates, which was already in the hands of the conspirators. The aged Andrea, then finding that all was lost, took horse, infirm as he was, and sought safety by flight into the country.

Its successful execution;

The triumph of Fiesco now seemed to have reached its consummation; but he was already beyond its enjoyment. Even at the moment when all opposition had ceased, and he prepared to quit the harbour and to rejoin his victorious companions in the city, a plank, on which he was hastily passing from the shore to a galley, overturned and precipitated him in his heavy armour into the sea:—to rise no more. When his fate was known, his followers immediately lost courage; and instead of taking possession of the palace of government as conquerors, they began to treat for mercy with the few assembled senators. An amnesty was granted to them; the

rendered abortive by the death of its leader.

CHAP. IX.
GENOA. 1530—1600

Fieschi withdrew from the city;* and before morning, tranquillity reigned again in Genoa. The old Doria, in the course of the day, re-entered the capital amidst the joyful acclamations of the citizens; and if he could forget the tragical death of his beloved nephew and the ebullition of factious ingratitude, no farther calamity shaded the residue of a life, which was prolonged to the age of ninety-four; and for above thirteen years after this solitary and brief interruption in his fortunate and glorious career.

After the death of this illustrious patriot in 1560, Genoa was troubled both by foreign disasters and intestine dissensions. In 1564, Corsica revolted from her yoke; and it was not without a dangerous struggle of four years, that that valuable dependency was again secured to the republic. During this crisis, too, in 1566, the isle of Scio, which the Genoese family of Giustiniani held of their country as a kind of fief, was conquered by the Turks. But such reverses affected the happiness of Genoa less than the progress of discord within her walls, both in the councils of the aristocracy, and between that order and the dependant people. The latter had an eternal source of discontent in their exclusion from political rights: the former were split into factions by the jealousy between the ancient nobility and their new associates in the aristocracy, whose rights were ill defined. The quarrel of the privileged orders rose to such a height that, at

CHAP. IX.

GENOA. 1530—1600

length, the mediation of the pope, the emperor, and the king of Spain was accepted, as the only mode of averting a civil war.

Final consolidation of the Genoese oligarchy. 1576

By the arbitration of these powers, the constitution of Genoa was once more modified. The new nobles were placed on an exact equality with the old in the sovereign aristocracy; the institution of the alberghi was suppressed; and every family resumed its original name. But the interests of the mass of the people were entirely sacrificed; and the consolidation of an hereditary aristocracy finally confirmed the limitation of all political rights within the pale of that order. The strength of old associations and manners, the force of public opinion, and the long habits of a democracy, had still however some effect upon the laws of the republic. It was provided that ten new citizens might annually be admitted into the noble and privileged body. The persons who received such prerogatives and honors ceased, indeed, thenceforth to belong to the people: they shared the interests and adopted the feelings of the order into which they were received. But, as some of the old aristocratical families became extinct, and others dwindled in numbers, this practice of recruiting from the popular ranks alone prevented the Genoese oligarchy from becoming as narrow, exclusive, and oppressive, as that of Venice itself. *

* Filippo Casoni, Annali di Genova, vols. ii—iv. ad p. 70. See also, passim, Storia di Giovan Battista Adriani, the continuator of Guicciardini, ad annos:—but particularly b. vi. pp. 369—75, for the conspiracy of Fiesco.

CHAP. IX.

VENICE. 1530—1600

Unimpaired vigour of her oligarchical despotism, and internal tranquillity of the state.

The government of Venice, that stern and imposing edifice of antiquity, seemed meanwhile to have suffered no dilapidation from the shock of centuries. Frowning over the gay and splendid bosom of the Adriatic, it stood like a feudal donjon; its massive grandeur deepened in gloom, not impaired, by the ravages of time; its form alike unchanged and unchangeable. But if this fabric of real despotism, which had been erected for the pretended security of republican freedom, was not even menaced by domestic assaults, its outworks were no longer proof against foreign hostility. No decay of the Venetian power was indeed perceptible in the severity and oppression of the oligarchy towards its own subjects; and the whole of the period before us was undistinguished by the slightest vicissitude in the internal government and affairs of the state. But before the peace of Cambray, the progress of maritime discovery had diverted the commerce of the world, which Venice had once engrossed, into other channels; the conduits of her wealth and prosperity were dried up; and long wars had aggravated her losses and consumed her treasures. Her senate wisely laboured to veil the hopeless exhaustion of her resources, and the decline of her strength, under the guise of moderation and neutrality; and their efforts were so successful in concealing the weakness and languor of her fallen condition, that Venice may be said to have preserved the reputation of her ancient grandeur in Christian Europe, for nearly two centuries after its real extinction.

Decay of the foreign power of the republic.

Neutrality wisely observed by her senate;

But the colonial possessions of the republic were exposed to attacks from a quarter, in which ancient impressions had less influence, and present weakness was more palpably exhibited. The Ottoman power had not yet passed its zenith; the eastern dependencies of Venice were tempting spoils for the ambition and cupidity of the sultans; and twice, during the last seventy years of the sixteenth century, was the republic forcibly dragged from the repose and oblivion, in which the senate studiously enveloped her, to suffer an unequal collision with the gigantic masses and furious energy of the Turkish power. Two unfortunate and cruel wars with the Porte broke the long intervals of her monotonous tranquillity; and these are, for the greater part of a century, the only occurrences in Venetian history to require our brief notice.

but twice interrupted during this period by Turkish wars.

Into the first of these contests, Venice was forced in 1537, during the scandalous alliance of Francis I. with Solyman the Magnificent against the imperial power. The French monarch vainly endeavoured to persuade the republic to confederate with him and with the infidels; the sultan was determined to oblige her at all hazards to abandon her posture of neutrality; and his injurious and hostile proceedings, instead of terrifying her into making common cause with him, naturally drove her to throw herself into the arms of the imperial party. After some accidental affrays at sea had widened the rupture into an open war, a large Turkish armament was directed against

The first of these;

CHAP. IX.

VENICE. 1530—1600

Corfu, and horribly devastated that island, but without attempting its reduction. The naval forces of Venice, which were inferior in numbers to those of Solyman, could not prevent this disaster; but, in the following year, a formal league was signed between the emperor, the pope, and the Venetians, against their common and infidel enemies. This confederacy might have sufficed to chastise the ambitious spirit of the Turks; but Charles V., who had concluded a truce with France, was now solicitous only to leave the burthens of the war upon Venice, to use her resources and husband his own, and to obtain better terms for himself through her sacrifices. Doria, his admiral, was restrained from all vigorous action; and finding their colonies wrested from them in successive campaigns, while the gallies of their imperial ally were either altogether withheld from joining their fleet, or permitted to make only a few vain demonstrations, the Venetians at length resolved no longer to support a struggle, the whole weight of which fell hopelessly on themselves. They sought and obtained a separate peace, by leaving in the hands of the victorious Turks the islands of Palmos, Cesina, Nio, Stampalia, and Paros in the Archipelago, and the strong towns of Napoli and Malvagia, which the republic had still possessed in the Morea.

1538

concluded by the loss of several colonies.

1540

The second, a yet more ruinous struggle.

By the cessation of the Turkish projects against the colonies of Venice, just thirty years of profound peace were permitted to the republic, between the conclusion of this unfortunate war,

and the second and yet more ruinous struggle. But at length the sultan Selim II., after making immense preparations in his arsenals, offered the senate the insulting alternative of encountering the resistless might of his arms, or of surrendering to his sceptre the island of Cyprus, where he pretended that an asylum was afforded to the corsairs who plundered his subjects. The republic, stricken as she was with mortal languor, could only return one answer to the insolent demand, which would rob her of her fairest possession; and a furious war immediately commenced. A Turkish army, exceeding fifty thousand men at the lowest computation, was promptly disembarked on the coast of Cyprus, with a formidable train of artillery; while one hundred and fifty gallies protected and aided the operations of this numerous force.

1570

Conquest of Cyprus by the Turks. 1570—71

The Venetian troops in Cyprus had numbered only three thousand men, and even this inadequate garrison was now thinned by disease: the native militia was contemptible, the peasantry were ill affected, and the island contained only two fortresses. Yet the sieges of both these places, of the capital Nicosia and of Famagosta, were signalized by two of the finest defences on record. The whole relation, indeed, of this war of Cyprus is full of that intense interest, which the unshrinking heroism of inferior strength, the despair and the unhappy fate of the brave, can never cease to command. But the numerous details of the struggle would carry us beyond our limits, and I pro-

CHAP. IX.
VENICE. 1530—1600

ceed at once to the result. The whole island was overrun and Nicosia reduced in the first campaign; and Famagosta yielded to exhaustion and famine in the following year, after thousands of the infidels had fallen in sanguinary and ineffectual assaults before the open breaches of the place. Its capitulation completed the conquest of Cyprus by the Turks, and was immediately violated by the inhuman torture and murder of Marc' Antonio Bragadino, the governor of the fortress, who had covered himself with glory in its defence.

When the Turks disembarked their formidable array in Cyprus, the Venetians by extraordinary efforts had fitted out a naval armament of near a hundred gallies and great vessels:—a force not unworthy of the prouder days of their republic. But even this fleet was far outnumbered by that of the enemy; and the senate dared not provoke the risk of an encounter. All their attempts to assist the gallant defenders of their most precious colony had therefore been limited to the hasty introduction of a few reinforcements into Famagosta, during the temporary absence of the main squadron of the Turks. Meanwhile, however, the senate were earnestly engaged in soliciting the powers of Europe to form a league with their republic in a cause, which was in some measure that of all Christendom. But of the nations of the cross, they could at first induce only the pope and other Italian powers to afford them the feeble succour of a few gallies; and when Philip II. of Spain was, after some delay, instigated by mingled

League of Christian powers with

Venice against the infidels.

fanaticism and self-interest to engage in the support of the republic, his selfish caution paralyzed the exertions of the league, as that of his father had done in the preceding war. The orders of Philip to his admiral, to whom the chief command of the allied fleets was yielded, prevented any vigorous measure, until Cyprus had already fallen. But at length don Juan of Austria, natural brother of Philip, was permitted by that monarch to assume the office of generalissimo of the Christian league; and the impetuosity of this young prince could not be restrained to accord with the sluggish policy of the Spanish court. The Turkish fleet, now swollen to the enormous force of two hundred and fifty gallies and other vessels of war, had already appeared in the Ionian sea; the Christian armament of equal strength was concentrated off Corfu.

Great battle of Lepanto. 1571

At length, in the gulf of Lepanto, near the ancient promontory of Actium,—famous for the only naval battle, says Daru, which ever decided the fate of an empire—the banners of the cross and the crescent floated over five hundred decks, in the most gigantic and sanguinary naval encounter, which any age of the world had yet seen. Along the whole extent of the vast hostile lines of four miles, the day was long and furiously contested; the ancient names of the Venetian oligarchy were once more emblazoned in glorious achievement; the ancient maritime valour of the republic seemed once again to rekindle in all its

CHAP. IX.

VENICE. 1530—1600

lustre, for this last and expiring effort. The triumph of the Christian alliance was complete, and the chief honors of the victory were due to the Venetians. Thirty thousand Turks were slain; near two hundred of their vessels were captured, sunk, stranded, or burnt; and the conquerors purchased their brilliant success with the lives of five thousand of their bravest.

That victory of the league entirely without fruits.

Strange as it should seem, the victory of Lepanto was a barren triumph. The confederates immediately separated, and returned to their ports to enjoy their useless laurels, and to repair their losses. No farther operations were attempted after the destruction of the Turkish fleet; and the Venetians found the deplorable exhaustion of their overstrained energies the only fruits of their success. The Turks covered the Grecian seas with a new armament before the following summer, scarcely inferior in strength to that which they had lost: and the confederates, having vainly endeavoured to bring them to action, dispersed after a short and insignificant campaign. The Venetians had more reason to dread the desertion of their allies, and the total consumption of their resources, than to hope for any ultimate advantage from the war. The Turks equally desired repose, but were resolved not to part with their acquisition; and the republic, by leaving them in possession of Cyprus, finally obtained a peace. By thus submitting to the loss of a subject kingdom,—a loss cruelly aggravated by its shame—

Peace purchased by Venice with the loss of Cyprus. 1573

the discrowned queen of the Adriatic was suffered to sink again into the languid slumber, which endured beyond the close of the sixteenth century. *

* Vettor Sandi, Stor. Civ. Venez. b. x. cc. 1—15. Daru, Hist. de Venise, vol. iv. bb. xxv—xxviii. For the details of the war of Cyprus, I would refer the reader to Paolo Paruta, Hist. della Guerra di Cipro; a work which has all the animating interest of fiction, with the air, at least, of fidelity, and is very superior to the history of Venice by the same writer:—which I have also consulted.

CHAPTER X.

STATE OF ITALY DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, A.D. 1600—1700.

PART I.

General Aspect of Italy in the Seventeenth Century—Confirmed Degradation of the People—Total Corruption of Italian Manners—Cecisbeism—The unimportant political Fortunes of the Peninsula during this Century; best described in noticing the Affairs of its States under separate Heads—THE SPANISH PROVINCES OF ITALY—*Milan and Sardinia—Naples—Rapacious Oppression and Mal-administration of the Spanish Government in that Kingdom—General Discontent of the People—Singular and abortive Conspiracy of the monastic Orders in Calabria—The Neapolitans driven to revolt by Want and Misery—Furious Insurrection of the Populace of the Capital, headed by the Fisherman Masaniello—Fearful Power of that Demagogue—The Viceroy compelled to yield to the Insurgents—He obtains the Assassination of Masaniello—The aggravated Perfidy of the Spaniards, produces new Bloodshed and successful Revolt—The Neapolitans determine to erect a Republic—Divisions among the People—Termination of the Insurrection—The Spanish Despotism re-established with signal Cruelty, and maintained to the End of the Century—Sicily—Its Fate similar to that of the Sister Kingdom of Naples—Ineffectual Insurrection at Palermo—More serious Revolt of Messina—The Spanish Governor expelled—The Messinese declare Louis XIV. of France, King of Sicily—Progress of the Contest of Messina*

*between France and Spain—Louis XIV. basely and cruelly deserts the Messinese—Their accumulated Miseries—Merciless Punishment of their Revolt by the Spanish Government—Decay of Messina—*THE POPEDOM—*Succession of Pontiffs—Paul V. —His abortive Attempts to revive the ancient Pretensions of the Holy See—Urban VIII.—War of the Barberini—The Duchy of Urbino annexed to the Papacy; and the Fiefs of Castro and Ronciglione also—Alexander VII.—Quarrel respecting the Privileges of the French Embassy at Rome—Insolent Pretensions of Louis XIV., maintained by the Humiliation of the Holy See—Innocent XI.—The Dignity of the Papacy again violated by Louis XIV.—The French King at length relaxes in his Pretensions—Unimportant Pontificates of the Successors of Innocent XI.—*PARMA—*Reigns of the Dukes Ranuccio I. — Odoard — and Ranuccio II.—Sloth and hereditary Corpulence of the Princes of Farnèse—Approaching Extinction of their Line—*MODENA—*Reigns of Cesare—Alfonso III.—Francesco I.—Alfonso IV.—Francesco II.—and Rinaldo of Este—*MANTUA—*General War caused by the disputed Succession to that Duchy—Disgraceful Reign and abandoned Character of Ferdinand Charles, the last Duke—*TUSCANY—*Reign of the Arch-duke Ferdinando I.—His Encouragement of commercial Industry in his States—He founds the Prosperity of Leghorn; and amasses immense Treasures—His Son, Cosmo II. pursues his enlightened Policy—Ferdinando II.—The Treasury drained by furnishing Subsidies to the House of Austria—Extinction of the political Importance of Tuscany—Reign of Cosmo III.—Florence, the Seat of gloomy Superstition.*

CHAP. X. PART I.

General aspect of Italy in the seventeenth century.

THE general aspect of Italy, during the whole course of the seventeenth century, remained unchanged by any signal revolution. The period which had already elapsed, between the extinction of national and civil independence and the opening of the period before us, had sufficed to establish the permanency of the several despotic governments of the peninsula, and to regulate the

CHAP. X. PART I.

limits of their various states and provinces. If we except some popular commotions in Naples and Sicily, the struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor had wholly ceased. Servitude had become the heir-loom of the people; and they bowed their necks unresistingly and from habit to the grievous yoke, which their fathers had borne before them. Their tyrants, domestic and foreign, revelled or slumbered on their thrones. The Italian princes of the seventeenth century were more voluptuous and effeminate, but perhaps were less ferocious and sanguinary than the ancient Visconti, the Scala, the Carrara, the Gonzaga. But the condition of their subjects was not the less degraded. Their sceptres had broken every mouldering relic of freedom; and their dynasties, unmolested in their seats, were left (I except that of Savoy) to that quiet and gradual extinction, which was ensured by the progress of mental and corporeal degeneracy: the hereditary consequences of slothful and bloated intemperance. The seventeenth century, however, saw untroubled to its close the reign of several ducal houses, which were to become extinct in the following age.

Confirmed degradation of the people.

Compared with that of the preceding century, the history of Italy at this period may appear less deeply tinged with national crime, and humiliation, and misery; for the expiring throes of political vitality had been followed by the stillness of death. But, as a distinguished writer has well remarked, we should greatly err if, in observing

that history is little more than the record of human calamity, we should conclude that the times over which it is silent are necessarily less characterized by misfortune. History can seldom penetrate into the recesses of society, can rarely observe the shipwreck of domestic peace, and the destruction of private virtue. The happiness and the wretchedness of families equally escape its cognizance. But we know that, in the country and in the times which now engage our attention, the frightful corruption of manners and morality had sapped the most sacred relations of life. The influence of the Spanish sovereignty over a great part of the peninsula had made way for the introduction of many Castilian prejudices; and these were fatally engrafted on the vices of a people, already too prone to licentious gallantry. The merchant-noble of the Italian republics had been taught to see no degradation in commerce; and some of the numerous members of his house were always engaged in pursuits, which increased the wealth and consequence of their family. But the haughty cavalier of Spain viewed the exercise of such plebeian industry with bitter contempt. The Spanish military inundated the peninsula; and the growth of Spanish sentiment was encouraged by the Italian princes. They induced their courtiers to withdraw their capitals from commerce, that they might invest them in estates, which descended to their eldest sons, the representatives of their families; and the younger branches of every noble house were condemned

Total corruption of Italian manners.

CHAP. X. PART I.

to patrician indolence, poverty, and celibacy. It was to recompense these younger sons, thus sacrificed to family pride, and for ever debarred from forming matrimonial connections, that the strange and demoralizing office of the *cecisbeo* or *cavaliere servente* was instituted:—an office which, under the guise of romantic politeness, and fostered by the dissolute example of the Italian princes and their courts, thinly veiled the universal privilege of adultery.

Cecisbeism.

This pernicious and execrable fashion poisoned the sweet fountain of domestic happiness and confidence at its sources. The wife was no longer the intimate of her husband's heart, the faithful partner of his joys and cares. The eternal presence of the licenced paramour blasted his peace; and the emotions of paternal love were converted into distracting doubts or baleful indifference. The degraded parent, husband, son, fled from the pollution which reigned within his own dwelling, himself to plunge into a similar vortex of corruption. All the social ties were loosened:— need we demand of history if public happiness could reside in that land, where private morality had perished?*

The unimportant political fortunes of the peninsula during this century;

1607

In attempting to bring the unimportant fortunes of Italy during the seventeenth century into a general point of view, we should find considerable and needless difficulty. In the beginning of the century, a quarrel between the popedom and

* Sismondi, vol. xvi. pp. 219—229.

1627

Venice appeared likely to kindle a general war in the peninsula; but the difference was terminated by negociation. Twenty years later, the disputed succession of the duchy of Mantua created more lasting troubles, and involved all Lombardy in hostilities; in which the imperialists, the Spaniards, the French, and the troops of Savoy, once more mingled on the ancient theatre of so many sanguinary wars and calamitous devastations. But this uninteresting struggle, if not marked by less cruelty and rapine towards the inhabitants of the country, was pursued with less destructive vigour and activity, than in the preceding century; nor were the French arms attended by those violent alternations of success and failure, which had formerly inflicted such woes upon the peninsula. From the epoch at which Henry IV. excluded himself from Italy by the Savoyard treaty, until the ambitious designs of cardinal Richelieu involved France in the support of the pretensions of the Grisons over the Valteline country against Spain, the French standards had not been displayed beyond the Alps. But from the moment at which the celebrated minister of Louis XIII. engaged in this enterprise, until the peace of the Pyrenees, the incessant contest of the French and Spanish monarchies, in which the dukes of Savoy and other Italian powers variously embarked, was continually extended to the frontiers of Piedmont and Lombardy.

1621—1659

The arms of the combatants, however, seldom penetrated beyond the northern limits of Italy;

CHAP. X. PART I.

and their rivalry, which held such a fatal influence on the peace of other parts of the European continent, can scarcely be said to have materially affected the national affairs of the peninsula. Meanwhile, the few brief and petty internal hostilities, which arose and terminated among the Italian princes, were of still less general consequence and interest. The subsequent gigantic wars, into which Louis XIV., by his insatiable lust of conquest, forced the great powers of Europe, were little felt in Italy until the close of the century; except in the territories of the dukes of Savoy. Thus altogether, instead of endeavouring to trace the history of Italy during the seventeenth century, as one integral and undivided subject, it will be more convenient still to consider the few important events in the contemporary annals of her different provinces, as really appertaining, without much connection, to distinct and separate states;—and the affairs of these I shall notice nearly in the same order as in the last chapter.

best described in noticing the affairs of its states under separate heads.

THE SPANISH PROVINCES OF ITALY. 1600—1700

The immediate dominion of the Spanish monarchy over great part of Italy, lasted during the whole of the seventeenth century. Naples, Sicily, Milan, and Sardinia, were exposed alike to the oppression of the Spanish court, and to the inherent vices of its administration. Its grievous exactions were rendered more ruinous by the injudicious and absurd manner of their infliction; by the private rapacity of the viceroys, and the peculation of their officers. Its despotism was aggravated by all the wantonness of power, and all the

contemptuous insolence of pride. But of these four subject states, the two last, Milan and Sardinia, suffered in silence; and except that the Lombard duchy was almost incessantly a prey to warfare and ravages, from which the insular kingdom was exempted, a common obscurity and total dearth of all interest equally pervade the annals of both. But the fortunes of the two kingdoms of Naples and Sicily were more remarkable from the violent efforts of the people, ill conducted and unsuccessful though these were, to shake off the intolerable yoke of Spain.

Milan and Sardinia.

Naples.

To describe the state of the viceroyalty of Naples in the seventeenth century, I need only repeat and strengthen the picture drawn in the last chapter. For, as the decline of the Spanish monarchy, which had already commenced in the reign of Philip II., continued rapidly progressive under his successors, the third and fourth Philip, and the feeble Charles II., so the necessities of the Spanish government became more pressing, and its demands more rapacious and exorbitant. Of the revenue of about six millions of gold ducats, which the viceroys extorted from the kingdom, less than one million and a half covered the whole public charge, civil and military, of the country; and after all their own embezzlements and those of their subalterns, they sent yearly to Spain more than four millions, no part of which ever returned. Thus was the kingdom perpetually drained of wealth, which nothing but the lavish abundance of nature in that most fertile of

Rapacious oppression and mal-administration of the Spanish government in that kingdom.

CHAP. X. PART I.

THE SPANISH PROVINCES OF ITALY. 1600—1700

regions could in any degree have renovated. But even the luxuriant opulence of Naples could neither satisfy the avarice of the court of Madrid, nor protect the people from misery and want under a government, whose impositions encreased with the public exhaustion, and were multiplied with equal infatuation and wickedness upon the common necessaries of life. In this manner, duties were established upon flesh, fish, oil, and even upon flour and bread; and the people found themselves crushed under taxation, to pay the debts and to feed the armies of Spain. Their wealth and their youth were alike drawn out of their country, in quarrels altogether foreign to the national interests: in the unfortunate and mismanaged wars of the Spanish court in Lombardy and Catalonia, in the Low Countries and Germany.* Meanwhile, as during the last century,

* We may judge of the manner, in which Naples was habitually drained of resources of all kinds under the Spanish government, by the detailed statement of Giannone that, between 1631 and 1637 alone —in the six years of the viceroyalty of the condé di Monterey—5500 cavalry and 48,000 infantry were raised and *exported* for the Spanish wars in Catalonia, Provence, the Milanese duchy, the Low Countries and Germany. It was a part of these Neapolitan bands, which the cardinal-infant of Spain led through Italy into Germany in 1634, and which in conjunction with the imperialists, gained the famous battle of Nordlingen against the Swedish generals and their army. In the same six years also, Naples supplied 200 pieces of cannon, and 70,000 muskets, pikes, cuirasses, and pistols:—a very considerable fabrication of arms for that period. By all these efforts, the state incurred a debt of fifteen millions of ducats. See Istor. Civ. di Napoli, b. xxvi. c. 3.

the interior of the kingdom was almost always infested with banditti, rendered daring and reckless of crime by their numbers and the defenceless state of society; and so ill guarded were the sea coasts, that the Turkish pirates made habitual descents during the whole course of the century, ravaged the country, attacked villages and even cities, and carried off the people into slavery.

General discontent of the people.

It cannot excite our surprise, that the evils of the Spanish administration filled the Neapolitans with discontent and indignation: we may only wonder, that any people could be found abject enough to submit to a government, at once so oppressive and feeble. The first decided attempt to throw off the foreign yoke had its origin among an order, in which such a spirit might least be anticipated. In the last year of the sixteenth century, Tommaso Campanella, a Dominican friar, had on account, says Giannone, of his wicked life and the suspicion of infidelity, incurred the rigours of the Roman inquisition. On his release he laboured, in revenge for the treatment which he had received at Rome, to induce the brethren of his own order, the Augustins, and the Franciscans, to excite a religious and political revolution in Calabria. He acquired among them the same reputation for sanctity and prophetic illumination, which Savonarola had gained at Florence a hundred years before. He secretly inveighed against the Spanish tyranny; he declared that he was appointed by the Almighty to overthrow it, and to establish a republic in its place; and

Singular and abortive conspiracy of the monastic orders in Calabria.

CHAP. X. PART I.

THE SPANISH PROVINCES OF ITALY. 1600—1700

he succeeded in enlisting the monastic orders and several bishops of Calabria in the cause. By their exhortations, a multitude of the people and banditti of the province were roused to second him; and his design was embraced by great numbers of the provincial barons, whose names the historian declares that he suppresses from regard to their descendants. Campanella relied likewise on the assistance of the Turks in the meditated insurrection. But the secret of so extensive a conspiracy could not be preserved; the government got notice of it before it was ripe for execution; and Campanella and his chief priestly associates, with other conspirators, were adroitly arrested. Many of them were put to death under circumstances of atrocious cruelty, but Campanella himself, in the extremity of his torments, had the consummate address to render his confessions so perplexed and incoherent, that he was regarded as a madman and sentenced only to perpetual imprisonment; from which he contrived at length to escape. He fled to France, and peaceably ended his life many years afterwards at Paris. *

* The whole account of this conspiracy in Giannone is very curious, (b. xxv. c. 1.). Campanella relied, says he, upon two expedients; the *tongue* and arms. Among the friars, no fewer than three hundred preachers were appointed to beat "the drum ecclesiastic" of revolt through the kingdom. The union of clergy, nobles, and people in the same cause, however, speaks volumes against the Spanish government, notwithstanding the odium with which the Neapolitan lawyer labours to invest the whole affair. In all questions be-

After the suppression of this conspiracy, Naples was frequently agitated at different intervals by commotions, into which the lower people were driven by misery and want. These partial ebullitions of popular discontent were not, however, marked by any very serious character until the middle of the century; when the tyranny of the vice-regal government, and the disorders and wretchedness of the kingdom, reached their consummation. The Spanish resources of taxation had been exhausted on the ordinary articles of consumption; the poor of the capital and kingdom had been successively compelled to forego the use of meat and bread by heavy duties; and the abundant fruits of their happy climate remained almost their sole means of support. The duke d'Arcos, who was then viceroy, could find no other expedient to meet the still craving demands of his court, upon a country already drained of its life-blood, than to impose a tax upon this last supply of food; and his measure roused the famishing people to desperation.

The Neapolitans driven to revolt by want and misery.

An accidental affray in the market of Naples swelled into a general insurrection of the populace of the capital; and an obscure and bold individual from the dregs of the people immediately rose to the head of the insurgents. Tommaso

Furious insurrection of the populace of the capital, headed by the fisherman Masaniello. 1647

tween the tyrants and the people of his country, Giannone took the side of the former. Hence it may be feared, that it was not from any just sense of religious liberty that he opposed the popedom; and yet he has been praised as the very apostle of toleration.

CHAP. X. PART I.

THE SPANISH PROVINCES OF ITALY. 1600—1700

Aniello, better known under the name of Masaniello, a native of Amalfi and servant of a fisherman, had received an affront* from the officers of the customs, and sought an occasion of gratifying his lurking vengeance. Seizing the moment when the popular exasperation was at its height, he led the rioters to the attack and demolition of the custom house. The flames of insurrection at once spread with uncontrollable violence; the palace of the viceroy was pillaged; and d'Arcos himself was driven for refuge to one of the castles of Naples. The infuriated populace murdered many of the nobles, burnt the houses of all who were obnoxious to them, and filled the whole capital with flames and blood. Their youthful idol Masaniello, tattered and half naked, with a scaffold for his throne and the sword for his sceptre, commanded every where with absolute sway. Backed by one hundred and fifty thousand men, rudely armed in various ways and all-dreadful in their long smothered ferocity, their leader (I use the forcible language of a great native historian) killed with a nod and set fire with a look; for to what place soever he beckoned, heads were struck off and houses set in flames.

Fearful power of that demagogue.

The viceroy compelled to yield to the insurgents.

The viceroy, terrified into virtue at these excesses, which the long oppression of his court and his own tyranny had provoked, and finding the

* This Wat Tyler of his age and country was maddened by a gross insult offered to him in the person of his wife, who was detected by the tax gatherers with a stocking full of meal which had not paid the duty.

insurrection spreading through the provinces, consented to all the demands of Masaniello and his followers. By a treaty which he concluded with the insurgents, he solemnly promised the repeal of all the taxes imposed since the time of Charles V., and engaged that no new duties should thenceforth be levied; he guaranteed the ancient and long violated privileges of parliament; and he bound himself by oath to an act of oblivion. A short interval of calm was thus gained; but the perfidious viceroy employed it only in gratifying the vanity of Masaniello by caresses and entertainments; until, having caused a potion to be administered to him in his wine at a banquet, he succeeded in unsettling his reason. * The demagogue then by his extravagancies and cruelties lost the affection of the people; and d'Arcos easily procured his assassination by some of his own followers.

He obtains the assassination of Masaniello.

The viceroy had no sooner thus deprived the people of their young leader, whose native talents had rendered him truly formidable, than he immediately shewed a determination to break all the articles of his compact. But the people, penetrating his treachery, flew again to arms; and the insurrection burst forth in the capital and provinces with more sanguinary fury than

The aggravated perfidy of the Spaniards, produces new bloodshed and successful revolt.

* At least such is the common story; but if Masaniello really became insane, it is more natural to attribute his madness to the intoxication of vanity, the dizziness of a sudden elevation, the overwrought intensity of mental excitation, during the few days of his strange and fevered reign.

CHAP. X. PART I.

THE SPANISH PROVINCES OF ITALY. 1600—1700

before. Again d'Arcos dissembled; and, again the deluded people had laid down their arms; when, on the appearance of a Spanish fleet before Naples, the citadels and shipping suddenly opened a tremendous cannonade on the city; and at the same moment some thousand Spanish infantry disembarked and commenced a general massacre in the streets. The Neapolitans were confounded and panic-stricken at this aggravated perfidy; but they were a hundred times more numerous than the handful of troops which assailed them. When they recovered from their first consternation, they attacked their enemies in every street; and after a frightful carnage on both sides, the Spaniards were driven either into the fortresses or the sea.

The Neapolitans determine to erect a republic.

After this conflict, the people who, since the death of Masaniello, had fallen under the influence of Gennaro Annese, a soldier of mean birth, resolved fiercely and fearlessly to throw off the Spanish yoke altogether. It chanced that Henry, duke de Guise, who, by maternal descent from the second line of Anjou, had some hereditary pretensions to the Neapolitan crown, was at this juncture at Rome on his private business; and to him the insurgents applied, with the offer of constituting him their captain-general. At the same time, they resolved to erect Naples into a republic under his presidency; and the duke, a high-spirited prince, hastened to assume a command, which opened so many glorious prospects of ambition. The contest with the Spanish viceroy,

'his fortresses, and squadron, was then resumed with new bloodshed, and with indecisive results. But though the Neapolitans had hailed the name of a republic with rapture, they were of all people, by their inconsistency and irresolution, least qualified for such a form of government. In this insurrection, they had for some time professed obedience to the king of Spain, while they were resisting his arms; and even now they wavered, and were divided among themselves. On the one hand, the duke de Guise, outraged by their excesses, and grasping perhaps at the establishment of an arbitrary power in his own person, began to exercise an odious authority, and shewed himself intolerant of the influence of Annese: on the other, that leader of the people was irritated at finding himself deprived of all command. In his jealousy of Guise, he basely resolved to betray his countrymen to the Spaniards; and, in the temporary absence of the duke, who had left the city with a small force to protect the introduction of some supplies, he opened the gates to the enemy. The Spanish troops re-entered the capital; the abject multitude received them with acclamations; and de Guise himself, in endeavouring to effect his flight, was made prisoner, and sent to Spain, in one of whose gloomy dungeons he mourned for some years the vanity of his ambition.

Divisions among the people.

Termination of the insurrection. 1648

Thus, in a few hours, was the Spanish yoke again fixed on the necks of the prostrate Neapolitans; and it was rivetted more firmly and grievously than ever. As soon as their submission

The Spanish despotism re-established with signal cruelty,

CHAP. X. PART I. THE SPANISH PROVINCES OF ITALY. 1600—1700

was secured, almost all the men who had taken a prominent share in the insurrection, and who had been promised pardon, were seized, and under various pretences of their having meditated new troubles, were either publicly or privately executed. The traitor Gennaro Annese himself shared the same fate:—a worthy example that neither the faith of oaths, nor the memory of eminent services, are securities against the jealousy and vengeance of despotism. That despotism had no longer any thing to fear from the degraded people, who had returned under its iron sceptre. The miseries of Naples could not increase; but they were not diminished until the death of Charles II., and the extinction of the Austrian dynasty of Spain, in the last year of the century.

and maintained to the end of the century.

Sicily.

The sister kingdom of Sicily had long shared the lot of Naples in all the distresses, which the tyrannical and impolitic government of Spain could inflict upon the people. The Sicilians were only more fortunate than their continental neighbours, as the inferior wealth and resources of their island rendered them a less inviting prey to the insatiable necessities of Spain, to the drain of her wars, and the rapacity of her ministers. But even in Sicily, which by the excellence of its soil for raising corn seems intended to be the granary of Italy, the Spanish government succeeded in creating artificial dearth and squalid penury; and in the natural seat of abundance, the people were often without bread to eat. Their misery goaded them at length nearly to the commission of the

Its fate similar to that of the sister kingdom of Naples.

same excesses as those which have just been described at Naples. A few months earlier than the revolt under Masaniello, the lower orders rose at Palermo, chose for their leader one Guiseppe d'Alessi, a person of as low condition as the Neapolitan demagogue, and under his orders put their viceroy, the marquis de Los Velos, to flight. But this insurrection at Palermo was less serious than that of Naples, and, after passing through similar stages, was more easily quelled. The Sicilian viceroy, like d'Arcos, did not scruple at premeditated violation of the solemnity of oaths. Like him, he swore to grant the people all their demands and a total amnesty; and yet, after perfidiously obtaining the assassination of the popular leader, he caused the inhabitants to be slaughtered in the streets, their chiefs to be hanged, and the burthens, which he had been forced to remove, to be laid on again.

Ineffectual insurrection at Palermo.

This detestable admixture of perfidy and sanguinary violence bent the spirit of the Palermitans to the yoke, and Sicily relapsed into the tameness of suffering for above twenty-seven years; until this tranquillity was broken, during the general war in Europe which preceded the treaty of Nimeguen, by a new and more dangerous insurrection. The city of Messina had, until this epoch, in some measure enjoyed a republican constitution, and was governed by a senate of its own, under the presidency only of a Spanish lieutenant with very limited powers. This freedom of the city had ensured its prospe-

More serious revolt of Messina.

rity: its population amounted to sixty thousand souls, its commerce flourished, and its wealth rivalled the dreams of avarice. The Neapolitan historian asserts that the privileges of the people had rendered them insolent; but there is more reason to believe that the Spanish government looked with a jealous and unfriendly eye upon a happy independence, which was calculated to fill their other Sicilian subjects with bitter repinings at the gloomy contrast of their own wretched slavery. Several differences with successive viceroys regarding their privileges had inspired the citizens of Messina with discontent; and at length they rose in open rebellion against their Spanish governor, don Diego di Soria, and expelled him from the city. Despairing of defending their rights without assistance, against the whole power of the Spanish monarchy, they had then recourse to Louis XIV., and tempted him with the offer of the sovereignty of their city, and the eventual union of their whole island with the French dominions. Louis eagerly closed with a proposal, which opened at least an advantageous diversion in his war against Spain. He was proclaimed king of Sicily at Messina, and immediately dispatched a small squadron to take possession of the city in his name.

The Spanish governor expelled. 1674

The Messinese declare Louis XIV. of France, king of Sicily.

Progress of the contest of Messina between France and Spain.

The arrival of this force was succeeded, early in the following year, by that of a more formidable French fleet under the duke de Vivonne; and the Messinese, being encouraged by these succours, rejected all the Spanish offers of indemnity

and accommodation. On the other hand, the court of Madrid, being roused to exertion by the danger of losing the whole island, had fitted out a strong armament to secure its preservation and the recovery of Messina; and a Dutch fleet under the famous De Ruyter arrived in the Mediterranean to co-operate with the Spanish forces. The war in Sicily was prosecuted with fury on both sides for nearly four years; and several sanguinary battles were fought off the coast between the combined fleets and that of France. In all of these, the French had the advantage: in one the gallant De Ruyter fell; and in another the French, under Vivonne and Du Quesne with inferior force, attacked the Dutch and Spanish squadrons of twenty-seven sail of the line, nineteen gallies, and several fire-ships, at anchor under the guns of Palermo, and gained a complete victory. This success placed Messina in security; and might have enabled both Naples and Sicily to throw off the onerous dominion of Spain. But the spiritless and subjugated people evinced no disposition to rise against their oppressors; and all the efforts of the French eventually failed in extending the authority of their monarch beyond the walls of Messina.

Louis XIV. basely and cruelly deserts the Messinese.

The French king had lost the hope of possessing himself of all Sicily, and was already weary of supporting the Messinese, when the conferences for a general peace were opened at Nimeguen. There, dictating as a conqueror, he might at least

CHAP. X. PART I. THE SPANISH PROVINCES OF ITALY. 1600—1700

have stipulated for the ancient rights of the Messinese, and insisted upon an amnesty for the brave citizens who, relying on the sacred obligation of protection, had utterly provoked the vengeance of their Spanish governors by placing themselves under his sceptre. But, that his pride might not suffer by a formal evacuation of the city as a condition of the approaching peace, he basely preferred the gratification of this absurd punctilio to the real preservation of honor, and the common dictates of humanity. His troops were secretly ordered to abandon Messina before the signature of peace; and so precipitate was their embarkation, that the wretched inhabitants, stricken with sudden terror at their impending fate, despairing of pardon from their former governors, and hopeless of successful resistance against them, had only a few hours to choose between exile and anticipated death. Seven thousand of them hurried on board the French fleet, without having time to secure even their money or portable articles, and the French commander, fearing that his vessels would be overcrowded, sailed from the harbour; while two thousand more of the fugitives yet remained on the beach with outstretched arms, in the last agonies of despair, vainly imploring him with piercing cries not to abandon them to their merciless enemies.

1678

Their accumulated miseries.

The condition of the Messinese who fled for refuge to France, and of those who remained in the city, differed little in the event. Louis XIV.,

after affording the former an asylum for scarcely more than one short year, inhumanly chased them in the last stage of destitution from his dominions. About five hundred of them, rashly venturing to return to their country under the faith of Spanish passports, were seized on their arrival at Messina, and either executed or condemned to the gallies. Many others, even of the highest rank, were reduced to beg their bread over Europe, or to congregate in bands and rob on the highways; and the miserable remnant, plunged into the abyss of desperation, passed into Turkey and fearfully consummated their wretchedness by the renunciation of their faith. Their brethren, who had not quitted Messina, had meanwhile at first been deluded with the hope of pardon by the Spanish viceroy of Sicily. But the amnesty which he published was revoked by special orders from Madrid; and all, who had been in any way conspicuous in the insurrection, were either put to death, or banished. Messina was deprived of all its privileges; the town-house was razed to the ground; and on the spot was erected a galling monument of the degradation of the city:—a pyramid surmounted by the statue of the king of Spain, cast with the metal of the great bell which had formerly summoned the people to their free parliaments. The purposes of Spanish tyranny were accomplished; the population of Messina had dwindled from sixty to eleven thousand persons; and the obedience of the city was ensured by a

Merciless punishment of their revolt by the Spanish government.

Decay of Messina.

CHAP. X. PART I. THE POPEDOM. 1600—1700

desolation, from which it has never since risen to its ancient prosperity.*

Thus were the annals of Naples and Sicily distinguished only, during the seventeenth century, by paroxysms of popular suffering. The condition of central Italy was more obscure and tranquil; for the mal-administration of its rulers did not occasion the same resistance. Yet if the papal government was less decidedly tyrannical and rapacious than that of Spain, the evils, which had become inherent in it during preceding ages, remained undiminished and incurable; and agricultural and commercial industry was permanently banished from the Roman states. Meanwhile the succession of the pontiffs was marked by few circumstances to arrest our attention. To Clement VIII., who reigned at the opening of the century, succeeded, in 1605, Leo XI. of the family of Medici, who survived his election only a few weeks; and on his death the cardinal Camillo Borghese was raised to the tiara by the title of Paul V. Filled with extravagant and exploded opinions of the authority of the Holy See, Paul V. signalized the commencement of his pontificate by the impotent attempt to revive those pretensions of the papal jurisdiction and supremacy over

Succession of pontiffs.

Paul V.

His abortive attempts to revive the

* For the affairs of Naples and Sicily during the seventeenth century, I have continued to follow Giannone principally, (bb. xxxv.—xl. ad c. 3.); with occasional reference to Muratori, particularly on the fate of the Messinese, (ad ann. 1678.) and to Denina, Rivoluzioni d'Italia, b. xxiii. c. 7.

the powers of the earth, which, in the dark ages, had inundated Italy and the empire with blood. He thus involved the papacy in disputes with several of the catholic governments of Europe, and in a serious difference with Venice in particular, which will find a more appropriate notice in the affairs of that republic. After his merited defeat on this occasion, he cautiously avoided to compromise his authority by the repetition of any similar efforts; and during the remainder of his pontificate of sixteen years, his only cares were to embellish the ecclesiastical capital, and to enrich his nephews with vast estates in the Roman patrimony, which thus became the hereditary possessions of the family of Borghese. *

ancient pretensions of the Holy See.

Paul V., on his death in 1621, was succeeded by Gregory XV., whose insignificant pontificate filled only two years; and in 1623 the conclave placed the cardinal Maffeo Barberini in the chair of St. Peter, under the name of Urban VIII. This pope, during a reign of twenty-one years, was wholly under the guidance of his two nephews, the cardinal Antonio, and Taddeo Barberini, pre-

Urban VIII.

* If ever the mode of the application of wealth could excuse the mode of its acquisition, the history of the Borghese fortune is the case. Their villa at Rome was richer in gems of art, than any imperial or royal palace. It was adorned with thirteen hundred genuine pictures, and the porch of the principal casino boasted statues, which are the very canons of art. They seemed to belong to the people, so free was the access; or if any peculiar property was claimed, it was only in the inscription over the entrance, which told the world that they might enter when they would, and gaze till their taste was gratified.

fect of Rome. These ambitious relatives were not satisfied with the riches which he heaped upon them; * and their project of acquiring for their family the Roman duchies of Castro and Ronciglione, fiefs held of the church by the house of Farnése, involved the papacy in a war with Parma. Odoard Farnése, the reigning duke of Parma, had contracted immense debts to charitable foundations at Rome, of which he neglected to pay even the interest. He thus afforded Taddeo Barberini, as prefect of that capital, a pretext for summoning him before the apostolic chamber; and on his contemptuous neglect of the citation, the Barberini obtained an order for sequestrating his Roman fiefs. The duke of Parma had recourse to arms for his defence; the pope excommunicated him; and hostilities commenced between him and Taddeo, who acted as general of the church. But this war of the Barberini, as it has been named,—the only strictly Italian contest of the century—produced no decisive result. It was invested with a ridiculous character by the cowardice of Taddeo and the papal troops, who to the number of eighteen thousand fled before a handful of cavalry under the duke Odoard. After this disgraceful check, the Barberini were but too

War of the Barberini. 1641

1644

* Even the majestic and venerable ruins of the Coliseum did not escape the repetition of former injuries from the rapacity of the Barberini; and the appropriation of its materials to minister to their pride in the erection of a palace, provoked the punning reproach: "Quod non fecerunt Barbari, fecere Barbarini."

happy to obtain a suspension of arms; and the war was shortly terminated by a treaty, which left the combatants in their original state.

The duchy of Urbino annexed to the papacy;

Urban VIII., or rather his nephews, had thus failed in gaining possession of the fiefs of Castro and Ronciglione; but the pope had succeeded, some years before, in securing to the Holy See a much more important acquisition, which he did not venture to appropriate to his family. This was the duchy of Urbino, which had remained under the sovereignty of the family of Rovere since the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Julius II. had induced the last prince of the line of Montefeltro to adopt his nephew for a successor. The house of Rovere had for one hundred and twenty years maintained the intellectual splendour of the little court of Urbino, the most polished in Italy; but Urban VIII. persuaded the aged duke, Francesco Maria, who had no male heirs, to abdicate his sovereignty in favor of the church. The duchy of Urbino was annexed to the Roman states; and the industry and prosperity, for which it had been remarkable under its own princes, immediately withered.

1626

and the fiefs of Castro and Ronciglione also.

Urban VIII. was succeeded in 1644 by Innocent X., who revived with more success the pretensions of the Holy See to the fiefs of Castro and Ronciglione. The unliquidated debts of the house of Farnése were still the pretext for the seizure of these possessions; but the papal officers were expelled from Castro, and the bishop, whom Innocent had installed in that see, was

murdered by order of the minister of Ranuccio II., duke of Parma. The pope was so highly exasperated by these acts, that he directed his whole force against Castro; the Parmesan troops were repulsed in the attempt to succour the place; and when famine had compelled it to surrender, the pope, confounding the innocent inhabitants with the perpetrators of the assassination, caused the city to be razed to its foundations, and a pyramid to be erected on the ruins commemorative of his vengeance. The restitution of these fiefs to the house of Parma was made a condition of the peace of the Pyrenees; but Alexander VII., who succeeded Innocent X. in 1656,* contrived, after many negociations, to obtain permission to hold them in pledge, until Ranuccio II. should discharge the debts of his crown. By the failure of the duke to satisfy this engagement, the disputed states remained finally annexed to the popedom.

1649

Alexander VII.

Quarrel respecting the privileges of the French embassy at Rome.

The pontificate of Alexander VII. proved, however, an epoch of grievous humiliation for the pride of the Holy See. In 1660, an affray was occasioned at Rome through the privileges arrogantly claimed by the French ambassadors, of

* The election of Alexander VII. was remarkable for the obstinate assertion of a privilege, which the emperor and the kings of France and Spain had latterly acquired, whether expressly by stipulation, or imperceptibly through custom, and which these monarchs have always since maintained:—that of excluding from elevation to the tiara such cardinals as they think proper to oppose or dislike. On this subject, see Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, cent. xvi. sect. iii. part i. c. 1.

Insolent pretensions of Louis XIV.,

protecting all the quarter of the city near their residence from the usual operations of justice; and Louis XIV. determined, in the insolence of his power, to support a pretension, which would be intolerable to the meanest court in Europe. He sent the duke de Crequi as his ambassador to Rome, with a numerous and well-armed retinue, to brave the pope in his own capital. De Crequi took formal military possession of a certain number of streets near the palace of his embassy, according to the extent over which the right of asylum had been permitted by usage to his predecessors. He placed guards throughout this circuit, as if it had been one of his master's fortresses; and the papal government, anxious to avoid a rupture with the haughty monarch of France, overlooked the usurpation. But every effort to preserve peace was ineffectual against the resolution, which had been taken on the opposite side to provoke some open quarrel. The duke de Crequi's people made it their occupation to outrage the police of Rome, and to insult the Corsican guard of the pope. Still even these excesses of the French were tolerated by Alexander, until they rose to such a height that the peaceful citizens dared no longer to pass through the streets by night. At length the Corsican guard were goaded into a fray with the followers of the embassy, which brought matters to the crisis desired by Louis. While the Corsicans were violently irritated by the death of one of their comrades in the broil, they happened to meet the

CHAP. X. PART I. THE POPEDOM. 1600—1700

carriage of the duchess de Crequi; they fired upon and killed two of her attendants; and the duke immediately quitted Rome, as if his master had received in his person an unprovoked and mortal affront.

Alexander VII. soon found that Louis XIV. was resolved to avail himself of the most serious colouring, which could be given to this affair. The king expelled the pope's nuncio from France; he seized upon Avignon and its papal dependencies; and he assembled an army in Provence, which crossed the Alps to take satisfaction in Rome itself. The pope at first shewed an inclination to assert the common rights of every crown with becoming spirit; and he endeavoured to engage several catholic princes to protect the dignity of the Holy See. But none of the great powers were in a condition at that juncture to undertake his defence. His own temporal strength was quite unequal to a struggle with France; the spiritual arms of the Vatican had now fallen into contempt; and he had the bitter mortification of being obliged to submit to the terms of accommodation, which Louis XIV. imperiously dictated. The principal of these were, the banishment of all the persons who had taken a part in the insult offered to the train of the French ambassador; the suppression of the Corsican guard; the erection of a column, even in Rome, with a legend to proclaim the injury and its reparation; and, finally, the mission of one of the pope's own family to Paris to make his apologies. All these humiliat-

maintained by the humiliation of the Holy See. 1664

ing conditions were subscribed to, and rigorously enforced.— Hitherto the papal legates had appeared at the courts of Europe, only to give laws and impose contributions: the cardinal Chigi, the nephew of Alexander VII., was the first ecclesiastic dispatched in that character to any monarch, to demand pardon for the Holy See.

Alexander VII. did not survive this memorable epoch of degradation for the papacy above three years. * He was succeeded in 1667 by Clement IX.; who wore the triple crown only two years, and was replaced in 1669 by Clement X. The unimportant reign of this pope occupied seven years, and closed in 1676. The pontificate of his successor, Innocent XI., was more remarkable, for the renewal of the quarrel respecting the privileges of the French embassy. To terminate the flagrant abuses which these privileges engendered, Innocent published a decree that no foreign minister should thenceforth be accredited at the papal court, until he had expressly renounced every pretension of the kind. This reasonable provision was admitted without opposition by all the

Innocent XI.

* In more fortunate times, Alexander VII. would have been a prosperous sovereign, for he was not deficient in public spirit. In his general conduct he was less vicious than many of his predecessors, though Mosheim (who always loses temper when speaking of the popes) says that " he was possessed of all the pernicious qualities that are necessary to constitute a true pope, and without which the papal jurisdiction and majesty cannot be maintained." The worst thing about him was his poetry, for although, the morning after his election, he rudely repulsed the *Signora* Olympia who came to congratulate him, yet he wooed, but without success, the Muses.

CHAP. X. PART I. THE POPEDOM. 1600—1700

The dignity of the papacy again violated by Louis XIV. 1687

catholic monarchs, except Louis XIV.: but he alone refused to recognize its justice; and on the death of the duke d' Estrées, his ambassador at Rome, he sent the marquis de Lavardin to succeed him, and to enforce the maintenance of the old privileges. For this purpose, Lavardin was attended by a body of eight hundred armed men; and the sovereignty of the pope was again insolently braved in his own capital. The guards of Lavardin violently excluded the papal police from all access to the quarter of the city which they occupied; and Innocent at length excommunicated the ambassador. This proceeding would at Paris have excited only ridicule; but in Rome the outraged pride of the court, and the prejudices which still enveloped the ancient throne of papal supremacy and superstition, excluded Lavardin from the pale of society; and he found the solitude in which he was left so irksome, that he at last petitioned to be recalled.

The French king at length relaxes in his pretensions.

The pontificate of Innocent XI. terminated in 1690; and it was not until three years after his death, that Louis XIV. was at length persuaded to desist from the assertion of a pretended right, which could have no other object than to gratify his pride at the expence of multiplying crime and anarchy, in the chosen seat of the religion which he professed. This was the last event in the papal annals of the seventeenth century, which deserves to be recorded. We have already found the reigns of several of the popes entirely barren of circumstance; and after that of Innocent XI., I should be altogether at a loss how to bestow a

single comment upon the obscure pontificates of his three next successors: of Alexander VIII.,* who died in 1692; of Innocent XII.; and of Clement XI., who was placed in the chair of St. Peter in the last year of the century. †

Unimportant pontificates of the successors of Innocent XI.

PARMA. 1600—1700

The two contests with the popedom, which the house of Farnése maintained for the possession of the fiefs of Castro and Ronciglione, were almost the only remarkable circumstances in the annals of the duchy of Parma during this century. Ranuccio I., the son of the hero Alessandro Farnése, who wore the ducal crown at its commencement, resembled his father in no quality but mere courage. His long reign was distinguished only for its habitual tyranny and avarice; and for the wanton cruelty, with which he caused a great number of his nobility and other subjects to be put to death in 1612, that he might confiscate their property under the charge of a conspiracy, which appears to have had no real existence. He was succeeded in 1622 by his son, Odoard, whose misplaced confidence in his military talents plunged

Reigns of the dukes, Ranuccio I.,

Odoard,

* Lord Dartmouth, in his notes on Burnet's History of his own Time, has recorded several amusing stories of Pope Alexander VIII. Dr. Henderson, when singing the praises of Lacrymæ Christi, (History of Wines, p. 240.) should have informed his readers that this Pope, a little time before he died, asked his physicians how long they thought he could live. They told him about an hour. He then called for a large draught of Lacrymæ Christi, and said he could not die much the sooner for that. Burnet, History of his own Time, (vol. iv. p. 125. Oxford, 1823.)

† In compiling this abstract of the few temporal affairs of the papacy, which are material in our subject, I have followed Muratori, Annali d'Italia (in ann. cit.)

his subjects into many calamities. Vainly imagining that the martial virtues of his grandfather Alessandro were hereditary in his person, he eagerly sought occasions of entering on a career of activity and distinction in the field, for which his egotistical presumption and his excessive corpulence equally disqualified him. By engaging in 1635 in the war between France and Spain in northern Italy, as the ally of the former power, he exposed his states to cruel ravages; and though, in the subsequent war of the Barberini, he was indebted to the misconduct of the papal army for the preservation of his fiefs, that contest did not terminate until he had consumed the resources of his duchy by his prodigality and ignorance.

and Ranuccio II.

The death of Odoard in 1646 relieved his subjects from the apprehension of a continuance of similar evils from his restless temper; and the mild and indolent character of his son, Ranuccio II., seemed to promise an era of greater tranquillity. But Ranuccio was always governed by unworthy favorites, who oppressed his people; and it was one of these ministers whose violence, as we have seen, provoked the destruction of Castro, and entailed the loss of its dependencies on the duchy of Parma. The long and feeble reign of Ranuccio II., thus marked only by disgrace, was a fitting prelude to the extinction of the sovereignty and existence of the house of Farnése.

Sloth and hereditary corpulence of the princes of Farnése.

Buried in slothful indulgence and lethargy, the members of the ducal family were oppressed with hereditary obesity, which shortened their lives. Ranuccio II. himself survived to the year 1694;

PARMA. 1600—1700

but he might already anticipate the approaching failure of the male line of his dynasty. Odoard, the eldest of his sons, had died before him of suffocation, the consequence of corpulence; the two others, don Francesco and don Vincente, who were destined successively to ascend the throne after him, resembled their brother in their diseased constitutions; and the probability that these princes would die without issue, rendered their niece, Elisabetta Farnése, daughter of Odoard, sole presumptive heiress of the states of her family.

Approaching extinction of their line.

MODENA. 1600—1700

Of the dukes of Parma, whose reigns filled the seventeenth century, not one deserved either the love of his people or the respect of posterity. The contemporary annals of the princes of Este were graced by more ability and virtue. But the reduction of the dominion of those sovereigns to the narrow limits of the duchies of Modena and Reggio, diminished the consequence which their ancestors had enjoyed in Italy during the preceding century, before the seizure of Ferrara by the Roman See. Don Cesare of Este, whose weakness had submitted to this spoliation, reigned until the year 1628. His subjects of Modena forgave him a pusillanimity, which had rendered their city the elegant seat of his beneficent reign. His son, Alfonso III., who succeeded him, was stricken with such wondrous affliction for the death of his wife, only a few months after his accession to the ducal crown, that he abdicated his throne, and retired into a Capuchin convent in the Tyrol. On this event, his son Francesco I. assumed his sceptre in 1629, and reigned nearly thirty years.

Reigns of, Cesare,

Alfonso III.

Francesco I.

CHAP. X. PART I. MODENA. 1600—1700

Joining in the wars of the times in upper Italy between France and Spain, and alternately espousing their opposite causes, Francesco I. acquired the reputation of one of the ablest captains of his age, as he was also one of the best sovereigns. His skilful conduct and policy in these unimportant contests were rewarded by the extension of his territories; and in 1636, the little principality of Correggio (more famous in the annals of art than of war) was annexed to his imperial fiefs. Neither the short reign of his son and successor, Alfonso IV., which commenced in 1658 and ended in 1662, nor that of his grandson, Francesco II., which began with a feeble minority, and terminated after a protracted administration of the same character, demand our particular notice; and in 1694, the cardinal Rinaldo, son of the first Francesco, succeeded his nephew, and entered upon a reign, which was reserved for signal calamities in the first years of the new century.

Alfonso IV., Francesco II., and Rinaldo of Este.

MANTUA. 1600—1700

In the affairs of Parma and Modena, during the century before us, there is scarcely any thing to invite our attention; but the fortunes of Mantua, so obscure in the preceding age, were rendered somewhat remarkable in this, by the wars which the disputed succession to its sovereignty occasioned. The reign of Vincente I., who, having succeeded to the ducal crowns of Mantua and Montferrat in 1587, still wore them at the opening of the seventeenth century, and that of his successor Francesco IV., were equally obscure and unimportant. But, on the death of Francesco, in 1612, some troubles arose, from the pretensions

which the duke of Savoy advanced anew over the state of Montferrat. It was not until after several years, that negociations terminated the indecisive hostilities which were thus occasioned, and in which Spain interfered directly against the duke of Savoy, while France more indirectly assisted him. By the treaty of Asti in 1615, and of Madrid in 1617, the duke of Savoy engaged to leave Montferrat to the house of Gonzaga, until the emperor should decide on his claims. The last duke of Mantua, Francesco IV., had left only a daughter: but, as Montferrat was a feminine fief, that state descended to her; while her father's two brothers, Ferdinando and Vincente II., reigned successively over Mantua without leaving issue. On the death of the latter of these two princes, both of whom shortened their days by their infamous debaucheries, the direct male line of the ducal house of Gonzaga became extinct; and the right of succession to the Mantuan duchy devolved on a collateral branch, descended from a younger son of the duke Federigo II., who had died in 1540. This part of the family of Gonzaga was established in France, in possession of the first honors of nobility, and was now represented by Charles, duke de Nevers. By sending his son, the duke de Rethel to Mantua in the last illness of Vincente II., Charles not only secured the succession to that duchy, which he might lawfully claim, but re-annexed Montferrat to its diadem. For, on the very same night on which Vincente II. expired, the duke de Rethel received the hand of Maria, the daughter of Francesco IV. and heiress

CHAP. X. PART I. MANTUA. 1690—1700

of Montferrat; and the right of inheritance to all the states of the ducal line, thus centered in the branch of Nevers.

General war caused by the disputed succession to that duchy. 1627

The new ducal house of Gonzaga did not commence its sovereignty over Mantua and Montferrat without violent opposition. The duke of Savoy renewed his claim upon the latter province; and Cesare Gonzaga, duke of Guastalla, the representative of a distant branch of that family, made pretensions to the duchy of Mantua. At the same time, the Spanish government thought to take advantage of a disputed succession, for the purpose of annexing the Mantuan to the Milanese states; and the emperor Ferdinand II. placed the duke de Nevers under the ban of the empire, for having taken possession of its dependant fiefs, without waiting for a formal investiture at his hands. The objects of Ferdinand were evidently to revive the imperial jurisdiction in Italy, and to enrich the Spanish dynasty of his family by the acquisition of these states. To promote these combined plans of the house of Austria, an imperial army crossed the Alps and surprised the city of Mantua, which was sacked with merciless ferocity. At the same time, the duke of Savoy concluded a treaty with Spain, for the partition of Montferrat; and the new duke of Mantua seemed likely to be dispossessed of the whole of his dominions. But fortunately for him, it was at this juncture that cardinal Richelieu had entered on his famous design of humbling the power and ambition of both the Spanish and German dynasties of the house of Austria; and a French army

1630

under Louis XIII. in person forcing the pass of Susa, crossed the Alps to support the Gonzaga of Nevers against all their enemies. I pass over the uninteresting details of the general war, which was thus kindled in northern Italy by the Mantuan succession. When Richelieu himself appeared on the theatre of contest at the head of a formidable French army, all resistance was hopeless; and his success shortly produced an accommodation between the belligerents in the peninsula, by which the emperor was compelled to bestow the disputed investiture of Mantua and Montferrat upon Charles of Nevers.

1631

This prince, who thenceforth reigned at Mantua under the title of Charles I., retained that duchy without farther opposition. But in 1635 he was drawn, by the memory of the eminent services which France had rendered him, into an alliance with that power against Spain, in the new war which broke out between the rival dynasties of Bourbon and Austria. Such a connection could serve, however, only to destroy the repose and endanger the safety of his duchies. Neither Charles I. nor his son Charles II., who succeeded him in 1637, could prevent Montferrat from being perpetually overrun and ravaged by the contending armies of France, Spain, the empire, and Savoy; and the Mantuan dukes almost abandoned every effort to retain the possession of that province until, after being for above twenty years the seat of warfare and desolation, it was at length re-

CHAP. X. PART I. MANTUA. 1600—1700

stored to Charles II. by the general peace of the Pyrenees.

Disgraceful reign and abandoned character of Ferdinand Charles, the last duke.

Charles II. died in 1665; and his son Ferdinand Charles commenced the long and disgraceful reign, with which the sovereignty and race of the Gonzaga were to terminate early in the next century. This prince, more dissolute, more insensible of dishonor, more deeply buried in grovelling vice, than almost any of his predecessors, was worthy of being the last of a family which, since its elevation to the tyranny of Mantua had, during four centuries of sovereignty, relieved its career of blood and debauchery by few examples of true greatness and virtue. To gratify his extravagance, and indulge in his low and vicious excesses, Ferdinand Charles crushed his people under grievous taxation. To raise fresh supplies, which his exhausted states could no longer afford, he shamelessly in 1680 sold Casal, the capital of Montferrat, to Louis XIV., who immediately occupied the place with twelve thousand men under his general Catinat. The sums which the duke thus raised, either by extortion from his oppressed subjects, or from this disgraceful transaction, were dissipated in abandoned pleasures in the carnivals of Venice, among a people who openly evinced their contempt for him, and whose sovereign oligarchy passed a decree forbidding any of their noble body from mingling in his society. *

* For these sketches of the uninteresting affairs of the duchies of Parma, Modena, and Mantua during the seventeenth

From the affairs of Mantua, we may pass to those of Tuscany; but the transition is attended with little augmentation of interest. A common dearth of attraction marks the annals of most of the despotisms of Italy; and when Tuscany descended to the rank of a duchy, her pre-eminence of splendour survived only in the past, and her modern story sank into the same ignominious obscurity with that of Parma, and Modena, and Mantua. We are reminded only of the existence of the solitary republic which survived in this quarter of Italy, to wonder how Lucca escaped subjugation to the power, whose dominions encircled and hemmed in her narrow territory; and we are permitted to contemplate her ancient republican rivals, Florence, Sienna, and Pisa, only as the capital and the provincial cities of the ducal sovereigns of Tuscany. Of these princes of the house of Medici, four reigned successively during the seventeenth century. At its commencement, the ducal crown was worn by Ferdinando I., whose personal vices and political talents have been already noticed. After the failure of his project to throw off the Spanish yoke, his efforts were exclusively devoted to the encouragement of commerce and maritime industry among his subjects; and the enlightened measures, to which he was prompted by a thorough knowledge of the science of go-

Reign of the grand-duke Ferdinando I.

His encouragement of commercial industry in his states.

century, I have not scrupled to copy the outlines afforded by Sismondi (c. 124.); which however, it may be seen, that I have verified and occasionally filled up from the annals of Muratori.

CHAP. X. PART I. TUSCANY. 1600—1700

vernment and a keen perception of his own interests, were rewarded with signal success. To attract the trade of the Mediterranean to the shores of Tuscany, he made choice of the castle of Leghorn for the seat of a free port. He improved the natural advantages of its harbour, which had already excited the attention of some of his predecessors, by several grand and useful works; he invested the town which rose on the scite, with liberal privileges; and from this epoch Leghorn continued to flourish, until it attained the mercantile prosperity and opulence, which have rendered it one of the first maritime cities of the peninsula. The skilful policy, which Ferdinando I. pursued in this and other respects, produced a rapid influx of wealth into his states; and before his death, which occurred in 1609, he had amassed immense treasures.

He founds the prosperity of Leghorn; and amasses immense treasures.

Several of the first princes of the ducal house of Medici seemed to have inherited some portion of that commercial ability, by which their merchant ancestors had founded the grandeur of their house; and they profited by the contempt or ignorance, which precluded other Italian princes from rivalling them in the cultivation of the same pursuits. Cosmo II., the son and successor of Ferdinando, imitated his example with even more earnest zeal and with more brilliant success. But, on his death in 1621, the minority of his son Ferdinando II. destroyed the transient prosperity of the ducal government. The rich treasury of the two preceding dukes was drained in furnishing

His son, Cosmo II., pursues his enlightened policy.

Ferdinando II.

The treasury drained by furnishing

troops and subsidies to Spain and Austria; and Ferdinando, who was left under the guardianship of his grandmother and mother, was only released from female tutelage on attaining the age of manhood, to exhibit during his long reign all the enfeebling consequences of such an education. His character was mild, peaceable, and benevolent; and his administration responded to his personal qualities. From this epoch, the political importance of Tuscany entirely ceased; the state was stricken with moral paralysis; and lethargy and indolence became the only characteristics of the government and the people.

Subsidies to the house of Austria.

Extinction of the political importance of Tuscany.

Ferdinando II., however, was not destitute of talents; and the enthusiasm with which the grand-duke and his brother promoted the cultivation of science, at least protected his inactive reign from the reproach of utter insignificance. But his son, Cosmo III., who ascended his throne in 1670, reigned with a weakness, which was relieved by no intellectual tastes. Unhappy and suspicious in his temper, his life was embittered by domestic disagreements with his duchess; fanatical and bigotted, he was constantly surrounded and governed by monks; and at the close of the seventeenth century, Florence, once the throne of literature, the fair and splendid seat of all the arts which can embellish and illumine life, was converted into the temple of gloomy superstition and hypocrisy. *

Reign of Cosmo III.

Florence, the seat of gloomy superstition.

* Riguccio Galluzzi, Stor. del Gran Ducato di Toscana, vol. iv. b. v. c. 8.—vol. vii. b. viii. c. 7. Muratori, Annali, ad an. *passim.*

PART II.

Savoy—*General Character of its Princes and their Government—Charles Emmanuel I.—His Share, during the Remainder of his Reign, in the Wars of France and Spain in northern Italy—Disastrous Consequences of his overweening Ambition—His Death—Victor Amadeus I.—Tyrannical Ascendancy of the French in Piedmont throughout his short Reign—Calamitous Minority of his Son, Charles Emmanuel II.—Civil War in Savoy and Piedmont; aggravated by the Interference of France and Spain—Charles Emmanuel II. does not recover all his States, until the Peace of the Pyrenees—The Remainder of his Reign unimportant—Victor Amadeus II.—His early Indications of consummate political Talents—His Opposition to the Designs of Louis XIV. of France—He joins the League of Augsburg—War in Piedmont, sustained by Victor Amadeus and his Allies against the French—Fortitude and Activity of the Duke—He concludes a separate Peace; and compels a general Recognition of the Neutrality of Italy—His Power prodigiously augmented*—Genoa—*Differences of the Republic with the House of Savoy—Exclusive Character of the Genoese sovereign Oligarchy—Mutual Hatred between that Body and the unprivileged Orders—Conspiracy of Giulio Cesare Vachero—Its Detection and Punishment—Difference between the Republic and France, provoked by the Arrogance of Louis XIV.—Cruel Bombardment of Genoa by the French—The Senate compelled, by this barbarous Outrage, to make Submission to the Tyrant*—Venice—*Partial Recovery of her ancient Activity and Vigour during this Century—Quarrel between the Republic and Pope Paul V.—The Senate always distinguished for their Resistance to ecclesiastical Encroachments—Universal religious Toleration, a Maxim of their Policy—Intolerable Pretensions of Paul V., steadily opposed by the Venetian Government—Papal Sentence*

of Excommunication and Interdict passed against the Republic —Firm Resistance of the Senate to its Operations—Desire of the Pope to have Recourse to temporal Arms—He is compelled to renounce his Pretensions to procure an Accommodation—Signal Triumph of the Republic—Its good Effects for Catholic Europe —Energy of the Venetian Senate in maintaining their Sovereignty over the Adriatic—The Uscochi—Origin of those Pirates of Dalmatia—Their incessant and bold Depredations in the Gulf—The Austrian Government protect them—Serious Resolution at length formed by Venice to chastise them—Consequent War with the House of Austria—Alliance of the Republic with Savoy and the Seven United Provinces—Conclusion of the War—The Objects of Venice attained by the Dispersion of the Uscochi, and the Assertion of her Dominion over the Adriatic— Exasperation of Spain against the Republic—Story of the famous Conspiracy, attributed to the Spanish Ambassador, for the Destruction of Venice—Share of Venice in the other Italian Wars of this Century against the House of Austria; terminated by the Peace of Chierasco—Remarkable Recognition of her Dominion over the Adriatic—Little Connection between the Affairs of Venice and of the other Italian States, during the Remainder of the Century—Unprovoked Attack of the Turks upon the Republic—Long and disastrous War of Candia; marked by many glorious naval Achievements of the Venetian Arms—Heroic and sanguinary Defence of Candia—Peace obtained by the Republic by the Cession of that Island—New War of Venice, in Concert with the Empire, against the Infidels —Victorious and brilliant Career of the republican Arms—Conquest of the Morea—The Republic exhausted by her Efforts— Peace of Carlowitz—The Morea retained by Venice.

CHAP. X. PART II.

SAVOY. 1600—1700

General character of its princes and their government.

WHILE the other ducal thrones of Italy were thus for the most part filled only by slothful voluptuaries, that of Savoy seemed reserved for a succession of sovereigns, whose fearless activity and political talents constantly placed their characters in brilliant contrast with the indolence and imbe-

cility of their despicable contemporaries. The house of Savoy owes its progressive and successful elevation, from petty foundations to regal dignity, more to the personal abilities of its chiefs, than perhaps any other royal family in Europe. Its long line of princes is very thickly studded with able captains and skilful statesmen, who were the artificers of their own greatness, and who gradually raised for their descendants the fabric of a monarchy. This fabric, indeed, was erected merely for a strong-hold of arbitrary power; and it rose in strength and increased in durability, as the ruins of Italian freedom crumbled around it. Its completion bore the same date with the destruction of whatever might excite our sympathy and merit our interest in Italian history; and the repair of its dilapidated power is not among the least evils, which the peninsula has endured in these days. The career of the dynasty of Savoy is adorned, therefore, with little moral beauty, and associated with few recollections, on which the mind can dwell with satisfaction. Yet, in comparison with other despotisms, the government of the house of Savoy merits the distinction, until our own times at least, of mildness and paternal affection towards its subjects. The race of its sovereigns has produced no monsters of tyranny and blood; and if many of them were unscrupulous in their political transactions with foreign states, history has not to reproach them with the vicious excesses of their domestic administration.

Charles Emmanuel I.

When the seventeenth century opened, the sceptre of Piedmont and Savoy was wielded, as we have formerly seen, by the duke Charles Emmanuel I., who, by his treaty with Henry IV. of France in the year 1601, exchanged his Savoyard county of Bresse for the Italian marquisate of Saluzzo. By this arrangement, Charles Emmanuel sacrificed a fertile province to acquire a barren and rocky territory; but he excluded the French from an easy access into Piedmont, and strengthened his Italian frontier. By consolidating his states, he gained a considerable advance towards the future independence of his family; and the superiority of his policy over that of Henry IV. in this transaction, occasioned the remark of a contemporary, that the French king had bargained like a pedlar, and the Savoyard duke like a king.

His share, during the remainder of his reign, in the wars of France and Spain in northern Italy.

From this epoch, the house of Savoy became almost exclusively an Italian power, and its princes, to use the language of one of their historians, thenceforth viewed the remains of their transmontane possessions, only as a nobleman, moving in the splendour of a court, regards the ancient and neglected fief, from which he derives his title. Charles Emmanuel found that the improvement effected in the geographical posture of his states, immediately increased his importance; and his alliance was courted both by France and Spain. But during the remainder of his long reign, his own restless and overweening ambition, and the natural difficulties of his situation, placed

CHAP. X. PART II. SAVOY. 1600—1700

Disastrous consequences of his overweening ambition.

as he was with inferior strength between two mighty rivals, entailed many calamities on his dominions. He made an unsuccessful attempt in 1602 to surprise Geneva by an escalade in the night, and after a disgraceful repulse concluded a peace, which recognized the independence of that republic. Ten years later, he endeavoured, as we have seen, to wrest Montferrat from the house of Gonzaga; but being violently opposed by Spain, and weakly supported by France, he was compelled, after several years of hostilities, to submit his claim to the decision of the emperor:—or, in other words, to abandon it altogether. Such checks to his ambition were, however, of little importance, in comparison with the reverses consequent upon the share which he took in the war of the Mantuan succession.

1628

In that contest he was induced, by the hope of partitioning Montferrat with the Spaniards, to unite with them against the new duke of Mantua and the French his supporters; and he suffered heavily in this alliance. When Louis XIII., at the head of a gallant army, forced the strong pass of Susa against the duke and his troops, and overran all Piedmont, Charles Emmanuel was compelled to purchase the deliverance of his states by signing a separate peace, and leaving the fortress of Susa as a pledge in the hands of the conquerors. They insisted farther that he should act offensively against his former allies; but Louis XIII. and his great minister Richelieu were no sooner recalled into France by the war against

the protestants, than the versatile duke, resenting their tyranny, immediately resumed his league with Spain.

The possession of Susa rendered the French masters of the gates of the Savoyard dominions; and as soon as Richelieu had triumphantly concluded the war against the Huguenots, he returned to the Alps. He was invested by his master with a supreme military command, which disgraced his priestly functions; and he poured the forces of France again into Piedmont. The strong city of Pignerol was reduced in a few days; many other fortresses were captured and razed to their foundations; all Savoy was conquered by the French king in person; and above half of Piedmont was seized by his forces under the warlike cardinal. Amidst so many cruel reverses, oppressed by the overwhelming strength of his enemies, and abandoned by his Spanish allies, who made no vigorous efforts to arrest the progress of the French, Charles Emmanuel suddenly breathed his last, after a reign of fifty years. He was regarded by his contemporaries as a consummate politician and an accomplished captain. The praise of generalship may be accorded him; but the glare of talent which dazzled his times has vanished, and the admirable politician appears only as a restless intriguer.

His death. 1630

Victor Amadeus I., his eldest son and successor, was the husband of Christina, daughter of Henry IV. of France, and therefore disposed to ally himself with her country. Almost immediately after

Victor Amadeus I.

1631

his accession to the ducal crown, he entered into negociations with Richelieu, which terminated in a truce. In the following year, the general peace, which concluded the war of the Mantuan succession, was signed at Chierasco. By this treaty, the new duke of Savoy recovered all his dominions except Pignerol, which he was compelled to cede to the French; who, although Richelieu restored Susa to Victor Amadeus, thus retained possession of the passes of the Alps by Briançon and the valley of Exilles. Victor Amadeus was not inferior to his father either in courage or abilities; but he was not equally restless and intriguing. Submitting to circumstances beyond his control, he endured the ascendancy which France had acquired over his states, and the yet more galling pride of Richelieu, with temper and prudence. To the close of his short reign, he maintained with good faith a close alliance with Louis XIII.; which indeed it was scarcely optional with him to have rejected, and which, in 1634, involved him, as an auxiliary, in a new war undertaken by Richelieu against the house of Austria.

Tyrannical ascendancy of the French in Piedmont, throughout his short reign.

The death of Victor Amadeus in 1637, while this contest was yet raging, was the prelude to still heavier calamities for his house and his subjects, than either had known for nearly a century. He left two infant sons, the eldest of whom dying almost immediately after him, the succession devolved upon the other, Charles Emmanuel II., a boy of four years of age. By his testament, Vic-

Calamitous minority of his son, Charles Emmanuel II.

tor Amadeus committed the regency of his states, and the care of his children, to his duchess Christina. The government of that princess was in the outset assailed by the secret machinations of Richelieu, and by the open hostility of the brothers of her late husband. Richelieu designed to imprison the sister, and to despoil the nephew of his own master; and he would have annexed their states to the French monarchy, under the plea that the care of the young prince and the regency of his duchy belonged of right to Louis XIII., as his maternal uncle. When the vigilance of Christina defeated the intention of the cardinal to surprise her at Vercelli, the sister of Louis XIII. had still to endure all the despotic insolence of her brother's minister. The conduct of her husband's relations left her however no alternative, but, by submission to Richelieu, to purchase the aid of the French against them.

Both the brothers of Victor Amadeus, the cardinal Maurice, and prince Thomas, (founder of the branch of Savoy-Carignan) had quarrelled *

* Denina (Delle Rivoluzioni d'Italia, l. xxiii. c. 4.) supposes this quarrel of Victor Amadeus and his brothers to have been only feigned; that the two princes, under pretence of throwing themselves in disgust into the party of his enemies, might in reality promote the common interests of their family, by maintaining its relations with both the rival houses of France and Austria. But the worthy Abbè has apparently here amused his imagination, by converting a very simple occurrence into a refinement of political deceit:—no uncommon error in tracing the sources of historical action. At least the conduct of the two Savoyard princes was very consistent and easily explicable throughout, on the supposition

CHAP. X. PART II. SAVOY. 1600—1700

with the late duke, and withdrawn from his court to embrace the party of his enemies; the one entered the service of the emperor, the other that of the king of Spain in the Low Countries. On the death of Victor Amadeus, they returned to Piedmont only to trouble the administration of Christina by themselves laying claim to the regency; and at length, on her resisting their pretensions, they openly asserted them in arms. The two princes were supported by the house of Austria; the duchess-regent was protected by France; and the whole country of Savoy and Piedmont was at once plunged into the aggravated horrors of foreign and civil war. In the first year of this unhappy contest, the capital was delivered into the hands of prince Thomas by his partizans; and the regent, escaping with difficulty on this surprise into the citadel of Turin, was compelled to consign the defence of that fortress to the French, who treacherously retained the deposit for eighteen years. In like manner, they acquired possession of several important places; the Spaniards on their part became masters of others; and while the regent and her brothers-in-law were vainly contending for the government of Piedmont, they were betrayed alike by the ill faith and designing ambition of their respective protectors.

Civil war in Savoy and Piedmont; aggravated by the interference of France and Spain.

1639

that their quarrel with Victor Amadeus was real; and contradictory and unaccountable if it was not. The avowed origin of this rupture was their detestation of their sister-in-law, and of the French alliance; and their hostility to both was the same before and after the death of their brother.

A reconciliation in the ducal family was at length effected by the tardy discovery, that mutual injuries could terminate only in common ruin. The two princes deserted the party of Spain, and succeeded in recovering for their house most of the fortresses which they had aided the Spaniards in reducing. The duchess-mother retained the regency; and the princes were gratified with the same appanages, by which she had originally offered to purchase their friendship. Still the French remained all-powerful in Piedmont; and if death had not interrupted the projects of Richelieu, it is probable that the ducal house of Savoy would have been utterly sacrificed to his skilful and unprincipled policy, and that its dominions would have been permanently annexed to the monarchy of France. Even under the government of his more pacific successor Mazarin, it was not until the year 1657, that the French garrison was withdrawn from the citadel of Turin; and this act of justice was only extorted from that minister, as the price of his niece's marriage into the ducal family of Savoy. The exhaustion of Spain, and the internal troubles of France, had totally prevented the active prosecution in northern Italy of the long war between those powers. But the embers of hostility were not wholly extinguished in Piedmont until the peace of the Pyrenees, by which Charles Emmanuel II. recovered all his duchy except Pignerol and its Alpine passes, and these the French still retained.

Charles Emmanuel II. does not recover all his states, until the peace of the Pyrenees. 1659

CHAP. X. PART II. SAVOY. 1600—1700

The remainder of his reign unimportant.

The termination of the minority of Charles Emmanuel II. in 1648, had put an end to the intrigues of his uncles. But the duke continued to submit to the ambitious and able control of his mother until her death; and his subsequent reign* was in no respect brilliant. His states however, after the treaty of the Pyrenees, enjoyed a long interval of repose; and though the early close of

* There is one gloomy episode in the Piedmontese annals, which I have not attempted to notice; for, while it is scarcely connected with the general political fortunes of western Italy, it contains the materials for a chapter in ecclesiastical history, far too important and deeply interesting to be crowded into the narrow space, which such a work as this could afford for the subject. I refer to the remote origin, the growth, and the unhappy fortunes of the protestant communities in the vallies between Pignerol and the Alps:—the Vaudois or Waldenses. The reign of Charles Emmanuel II., however, deserves to be mentioned with disgrace as the epoch of a most atrocious and horrible persecution of this inoffending and pure-minded race; and it is one of the redeeming acts of Cromwell's policy, that the interference of his ambassador at the court of Savoy arrested their destruction. Thirty years later, during the minority of Victor Amadeus II., when Louis XIV. revoked the edict of Nantes, his influence with the Savoyard government produced another persecution of the Vaudois, which rivalled, or even excelled in horrors, the *dragonades* of the Cevennes. The French troops were the principal agents in the detestable work prompted by their inhuman master; and the Vaudois were all either massacred or driven into banishment. But Victor Amadeus, soon after he assumed the reins of government, restored the remnant of this suffering people to their homes; and thus terminated their last persecution. For ten centuries, the Vaudois had clung to their pure faith with the constancy of martyrs, and defended its mountain sanctuary with desperate heroism: their descendants have had only to struggle against poverty and oppression.

his life in 1675 subjected them to another minority, it proved neither turbulent nor calamitous, as his own had done. His son, the celebrated Victor Amadeus II., was only nine years old, when he nominally commenced his reign under the regency of his mother. This princess, a daughter of the French house of Nemours, had all the ambition without the talents which had distinguished the duchess Christina. Surrounded by French favorites and by the partizans of that nation, she was wholly subservient to the will of Louis XIV.; and Victor Amadeus, on attaining the age of manhood, gave the first indications of the consummate political ability, for which he became afterwards so famous, by his decent address in dispossessing his reluctant parent and her faction of all influence in public affairs, without having recourse to actual violence.

Victor Amadeus II.

His early indications of consummate political talents.

1689

The policy of the duke soon excited the suspicion of Louis XIV.; and after exhausting all the resources of negociation and intrigue for some years, to gain him over to his purpose of wresting Milan from the Spaniards, the French monarch resolved to disarm him. But Victor Amadeus penetrated his designs, and anticipated their execution. He was too good a politician, and too sensible of his own weakness, not to discover that, if he consented to open a free passage to Louis XIV. through his dominions, and to aid him in effecting the conquest of Lombardy, he should speedily be despoiled in his turn, and reduced to

His opposition to the designs of Louis XIV. of France.

CHAP. X. PART II. SAVOY. 1600—1700

He joins the league of Augsburg. 1690

the rank of a vassal of the French crown. He therefore acceded to the league of Augsburg between the empire, England, Spain, and Holland; and his subjects eagerly seconded him in his resolution rather to encounter the dangers of a contest with the gigantic power of France, than to submit without a struggle to the imperious and humiliating demands of Louis.

War in Piedmont, sustained by Victor Amadeus and his allies against the French.

The commencement of the war in Piedmont was marked by a torrent of misfortune, which might have overwhelmed a prince, of less fortitude than Victor Amadeus, with sudden despair. Although he was joined by a Spanish army at the opening of hostilities, the French, who commanded the gates of Italy by the possession of Pignerol, had already assembled in force in Piedmont. They were led by Catinat, who deserves to be mentioned among the most accomplished and scientific captains of his own or of any age; and the superior abilities of this great commander triumphed over the military talents of the young duke. At the battle of Stafarda in the first campaign, the allies were totally defeated; and great part both of Savoy and Piedmont was almost immediately afterwards reduced by the conquerors. Victor Amadeus was however undismayed; he continued the war with energy and skill; and the support of his allies and his own activity had the effect of balancing the fortune of the contest. Penetrating into France, he was even enabled to retaliate upon his enemies by this diversion, for

Fortitude and activity of the duke.

the ravage of his dominions; and although Catinat, in the fourth campaign, inflicted at Marsaglia upon the Piedmontese, Austrian and Spanish armies under the duke in person and the famous prince Eugene,* a yet more calamitous and memorable defeat than that at Stafarda, the allies speedily recovered from this disaster.

But it comes not within my purpose to repeat the often told tale of military operations, which belong to the general history of Europe. After six years of incessant warfare, Victor Amadeus was still in an attitude to render his neutrality an important object for France to gain, and one which he had himself every reason to desire. So that it could be attained with advantage to himself, he was little scrupulous in abandoning his allies; and the conditions which he extorted from Louis XIV. had all the results of victory. By the separate peace concluded between France and Savoy at Turin, Louis XIV. abandoned the possession of Pignerol and restored all his conquests in Savoy and Piedmont; but the most material

He concludes a separate peace; 1696

* This hero, though known as prince Eugene of Savoy, was an alien to the country of his forefathers, which was subsequently destined to be the theatre of many of his most fortunate exploits. His father, a younger son of that prince Thomas of Savoy, whom I have had occasion to mention, married the niece of Mazarin, and settled in France, where he was created count of Soissons. Eugene was the second son of this marriage, and passed into the imperial service, in resentment at the refusal of Louis XIV. to change his destination from the church to the profession of arms:—a refusal which the French monarch had sufficient reason to repent in the issue.

CHAP. X. PART II. SAVOY. 1600—1700

stipulation of the treaty was the neutrality of all Italy, to which the contracting parties equally bound themselves to oblige all other powers to accede. To enforce this article, Victor Amadeus did not hesitate to join his arms to those of France against his former allies; and the entrance of his forces, in conjunction with the army of Catinat, into the Milanese territories, immediately compelled the emperor and the king of Spain to consent to a suspension of arms in the peninsula.

and compels a general recognition of the neutrality of Italy.

The allies of Victor Amadeus might justly reproach him with a desertion of their cause, and perhaps even with the aggravation of perfidy; but he deserved the gratitude of Italy, if not for his selfish policy, at least for its fruits. In closing the gates of his own frontiers, he had skilfully provided also for the repose of the peninsula and its evacuation by the French. All Italy regarded him as a liberator; the security of his own dominions was effected; and his power and consequence were prodigiously augmented. Thus, by establishing the independence of his states, he prepared the claim of his house to the assumption of the royal title among the powers of Europe, to which he elevated it in the beginning of the new century. *

His power prodigiously augmented.

* For the history of the duchy of Savoy during the first sixty years of the seventeenth century, I have consulted Guichenon, Hist. Geneal. de la Maison de Savoie, from the point in the second volume cited in the last chapter (p. 351), to the close of the work, which terminates about the epoch of the peace of the Pyrenees. My guides during the rest of the century have been principally Muratori and

The increasing power of the sovereigns of Piedmont was a foreboding of evil for the only republic of the middle ages, which had partially escaped the storms of despotism in that quarter of Italy; and Genoa had already gained, during the seventeenth century, sufficient experience of the dangers of her vicinity to the princes of the house of Savoy. In the Grison war between France and the house of Austria, the republic was involved by her dependence upon Spain; and the share which she took in the contest enabled the duke of Savoy, then in alliance with France, to draw down the weight of the French arms upon her. Besides being actuated, by the usual rapacity of his ambition, with the hope of annexing the Genoese territory to his states, Charles Emmanuel I. had several causes of offence against the republic. Her rulers had before given assistance to the Spaniards against him; they had attempted to control him in the purchase of the fief of Zucarel from the family of Carretto; and the populace of Genoa had insulted him by defacing his portrait in their city during the excesses of a riot. He therefore pointed out Genoa to his allies for an easy and important conquest; and while he over-

Differences of the republic with the house of Savoy.

also Denina, Istoria dell' Italia Occidentale. 1809. This book, as M. Barbier says (Magasin Encyclopedique, Janvier 1814) was the completion of his Revolutions of Italy, for therein he had treated but little of Piedmont, Montferrat, and Savoy. But I have also referred with advantage to the Memoires Historiques sur la Maison Royale de Savoie (3 vols. 8vo. Turin, 1816) of the Marquis Costa de Beauregard, vols. ii. p. 122.—iii. p. 54.

CHAP. X. PART II. GENOA. 1600—1700

ran the Ligurian country, a French army of 30,000 men under the constable de Lesdiguieres advanced to the siege of the republican capital. Though the Genoese were unprovided against this sudden attack, they were animated by the brave spirit and the eloquence of one of their fellow-citizens, a member of the illustrious house of Doria, to oppose a firm resistance to the besiegers; and their gallant defence of the city was converted into a triumph, at the moment when they were reduced to extremity. A powerful Spanish armament, equipped with unusual vigour, arrived to their succour from Naples and Milan; the French were compelled to raise the siege; and the peace, which shortly followed these hostilities, served only to cover the duke of Savoy with the disgrace of merited failure in his designs against the existence of the republic.

1625

The secret hostility, which Charles Emmanuel cherished against Genoa, menaced her, a few years later, with more imminent perils; since the revengeful spirit of the duke was associated with the discontent of a large party in the republic. I have formerly noticed the constitution of the sovereign oligarchy of Genoa, and its tendency, by the extinction of some noble houses and the reduction of numbers in others, to narrow the circle of political rights. The surviving body, meanwhile, were sparing in the use of the law, which authorized them to admit ten new families annually to a share in their privileges of sovereignty. The senate either began to elude it

Exclusive character of the Genoese sovereign oligarchy.

altogether, or applied it only to childless or aged individuals. Thus, before the middle of the seventeenth century, the number of persons whose names appeared in the libro d'oro—the golden volume of privileged nobility—had dwindled to about seven hundred. A law was then passed, by which the whole of these exclusive proprietors of the rights of citizenship thenceforth took their seats in the great council on reaching the age of manhood, instead of entering it by rotation, as had formerly been the practice when the republic was represented by a more comprehensive aristocracy.

While the arrogance and the individual importance of the members of the oligarchy were increased in proportion to this diminution in their numbers, another class, that of the unprivileged aristocracy of birth and wealth, had multiplied in the state. Many ancient houses, possessors of rural fiefs in Liguria, and invested with titles of nobility, had been originally omitted in the roll of citizenship; many other families of newer pretensions had since acquired riches and distinction by commercial industry and other accidents of fortune; and the union of all these constituted an order, which rivalled the oligarchy in the usual sources of pride, and far outweighed them in numbers. Affected superiority and contempt on the one hand, and mortification and envy on the other, produced reciprocal hatred between these branches of the Genoese aristocracy; and their divisions inspired the duke of Savoy with the hope of plunging the state into an anarchy, by which he might profit.

Mutual hatred between that body and the unprivileged orders.

CHAP. X. PART II.

GENOA. 1600—1700

Conspiracy of Giulio Cesare Vachero.

1628

Pursuing his master's views, the ambassador of Charles Emmanuel at Genoa selected a wealthy merchant of the unprivileged aristocracy, Giulio Cesare Vachero, for the agitator and leader of a conspiracy to overthrow the oligarchical constitution. Vachero, although engaged in the occupation of commerce, aspired to move in the sphere of nobility. His immense riches, his numerous retinue, his splendid establishment, rivalled the magnificence of the Fregosi, the Adorni, the popolani grandi of other days. He always appeared armed and in martial costume,—the characteristics of the gentleman of the times; he was surrounded by bravos; and he unscrupulously employed these desperate men in the atrocious gratification of his pride and his vengeance. He found sufficient occupation for their poignards in the numerous petty affronts, which the privileged nobles delighted to heap on a person of his condition. Vachero was stung to the soul by all the scorn and disdain which the highly-born affect for upstart and unwarranted pretensions: by the contemptuous denial of the courtesy of a passing salutation, the supercilious stare, the provoking smile of derision, the taunting inuendo, the jest, the sneer.* Every one of these slights or insults offered to himself or his wife was washed out in the blood of the noble offenders.

* With what true observation of nature, Italian as well as English, Ben Jonson says,

——— "It is a note
Of upstart greatness, to observe and watch
For those poor trifles, which the noble mind
Neglects and scorns."

But all these covert assassinations could not satiate the revengeful spirit, and heal the rankling irritation of Vachero; and he was easily instigated by the arts of the Savoyard ambassador to organize a plot, and to place himself at its head, for the destruction of the oligarchy. He knew that his discontent was shared by all the citizens like himself, whose names had not been admitted into the libro d'oro; and he reckoned on the cooperation of very many of the feudal signors of Liguria, whose ancient houses had never been inserted in that register, and who found their consequence eclipsed in the city, by their detested and more fortunate rivals of the oligarchy. He readily induced a numerous party to embrace his design; he secretly increased the force of his retainers and bravos; and he lavished immense sums among the lower people, to secure their fidelity without intrusting them with his plans. The day was already named for the attack of the palace of government: it was determined to overpower the foreign guard; to cast the senators from the windows; to massacre all the individuals embraced in the privileged order; to change the constitution of the republic; and, finally, to invest Vachero with the supreme authority of the state, by the title of doge, and under the protection of the duke of Savoy. But at the moment when the conspiracy was ripe for execution, it was betrayed to the government by a retainer of Vachero, who had been appointed to act a subordinate share in it. Vachero himself

Its detection and punishment.

CHAP. X. PART II. GENOA. 1600—1700

and a few other leading personages in the plot were secured before the alarm was given to the rest, who immediately fled. The guilt of Vachero and his accomplices was clearly established; the proofs against them were even supported by the conduct of the duke of Savoy, who openly avowed himself the protector of their enterprise; and notwithstanding his arrogant threat of revenging their punishment upon the republic, the senate did not hesitate to order their immediate execution.

The insolent menaces of Charles Emmanuel were vain; and the firmness of the Genoese government produced no material consequences. During the distractions which closed his own reign, and which, filling that of his son, extended through the minority of his grand-sons, the republic remained undisturbed by the aggressions of the house of Savoy. In this long period of above forty years, the repose of Genoa was disturbed neither by any other foreign hostilities nor by intestine commotions. A second war, which at length broke out between the republic and the duchy of Savoy during the reign of Charles Emmanuel II., scarcely merits our notice, for its circumstances and its conclusion were alike insignificant; and during the remainder of the seventeenth century the Genoese oligarchy were only startled from their dream of pride and security by a single event:—the most humiliating, until our own times at least, in the long annals of their republic.

1672

CHAP. X. PART II. GENOA. 1600—1700

Difference between the republic and France, provoked by the arrogance of Louis XIV.

When Louis XIV. became master of Casal by purchase from the duke of Mantua, he demanded of the republic of Genoa permission to establish a depôt at the port of Savona, for the free supply of salt to the inhabitants of his new city, and the transit of warlike stores and recruits for his garrison. The Genoese government were sufficiently acquainted with the character of the French monarch, to anticipate that their compliance with this demand would terminate in his appropriating the port of Savona altogether to himself; and cautiously exerting the option of refusal which they unquestionably possessed, they eluded the application. With equal right and more boldness, they fitted out a few gallies to guard their coasts against any surprise, and to protect their revenue on salt. Louis imperiously required them to disarm this squadron; and then, driven beyond all the limits of endurance, and justly incensed at such an insult upon the independence of the republic, the senate treated the summons with contempt.

Cruel bombardment of Genoa by the French. 1684.

But the oligarchy of Genoa had not sufficiently measured the weakness of their state, or the implacable and unbounded pride of the powerful tyrant. A French armament of fourteen sail of the line, with a long train of frigates, gallies and bomb ketches, suddenly appeared before Genoa, and a furious bombardment of three days, in which fifty thousand shells and carcases are said to have been thrown into the place, reduced to a heap of ruins half of the numerous and magnificent

CHAP. X. PART II.

GENOA. 1600—1700

The senate compelled by this barbarous outrage, to make submission to the tyrant.

palaces, which had obtained for Genoa the appellation of the The Proud. The senate were compelled to save the remains of their capital from total destruction by an unqualified submission; and the terms dictated by the arrogance of the French monarch, obliged the doge and four of the principal senators to repair in their robes of state to Paris, to sue for pardon and to supplicate his clemency. The epithets of glory have often been prostituted on the character of Louis XIV., by those who are easily dazzled with the glare of false splendour; but of all the wholesale outrages upon humanity which disgraced the detestable ambition of that heartless destroyer of his species, this unprovoked assault upon a defenceless people, merely to gratify his insatiable vanity, was—if we except the horrible devastation of the Palatinate—the most barbarous and wanton. *

VENICE. 1600—1700

While Genoa was either wholly subservient to the influence of Spain, with difficulty repulsing the machinations of the princes of Savoy, or enduring all the insulting arrogance of France; her ancient rival was holding her political course with more pretensions to independence and dignity.

Partial recovery of her ancient activity and vigour during this century.

Throughout the age before us, Venice seemed roused to the exertion of the few remains of her ancient spirit and strength. Starting with renewed vigour from the languor and obscurity of the preceding century, the republic evinced a

* Filippo Casoni, Annali di Genova, vol. iv. p. 70—to the close of the work, which terminates with the year 1700:—also Muratori, ad ann.

proud resolution to maintain her prescriptive rights, and even in some measure aspired to assert the lost independence of Italy. Her efforts in this latter respect, indeed, deserve to be mentioned, rather for the courage which dictated them, than for their results. The relative force of the states of Europe had too essentially changed, the commercial foundations of her own prosperity were too irretrievably ruined, to render it possible that she should rear her head again above other powers of the second order, or become the protectress and successful champion of the peninsula. But, in the seventeenth century, the annals of Venice were at least not stained with disgrace. Even her losses, in a protracted and unequal contest with the Turks, were redeemed from shame by many brilliant acts of heroism in her unavailing defence; and the unfortunate issue of one war was balanced by the happier results of a second. But it was in the assertion of some of her long recognized pretensions, that the firmness of the republic was conspicuous and her success unalloyed.

Quarrel between the republic and pope Paul V. 1605

The first of the struggles, in which Venice was called upon to engage in this century, was produced, soon after its opening, by that violent attempt of pope Paul V., to which I have before alluded, to revive the monstrous and exploded doctrine of the papal jurisdiction and supremacy over the temporal affairs of the world. The Venetians had, even in the dark ages, been remarkable for their freedom from the trammels of super-

CHAP. X. PART II.

VENICE. 1600—1700

The senate always distinguished for their resistance to ecclesiastical encroachments.

stition, and consistent in repelling the encroachments of the ecclesiastical power.* Upon no occasion would the senate either permit the publication or execution of any papal decree in their territories, until it had received their previous sanction; or suffer an appeal to the court of Rome from any of their subjects, except by their own authority, and through the ambassador of the republic. The jurisdiction of the council of ten was as despotic and final over the Venetian clergy, as over all other classes in the state; and while ecclesiastics were rigidly excluded from all interference in political affairs, and from the exercise of any civil functions, the right of the secular tribunals to judge them in every case not purely spiritual was a principle, from which the government never departed either in theory or practice. Of all the extravagant privileges claimed by the Romish church for its militia, the exemption of the ecclesiastical body from taxation (unless as the immediate act of the popes) was the only one recognized by the Venetian government; and to annul this immunity was a project which had more than once been entertained. †

* In perfect consistency with this conduct, the Venetians always disclaimed the authority of the civil law. Butler's Horæ Juridicæ Subsecivæ, p. 104.

† The right of investiture to the temporalities of Venetian sees was exclusively arrogated to itself by the government; until the misfortunes of the republic, in the war of the league of Cambray, obliged the senate to conciliate Julius II. by making a partial concession on this point. But it was still insisted that the portion of the bishopricks and abbeys in the republican states, to which the popes

Universal religious toleration, a maxim of their policy.

With a spirit similar to that which retained the clergy under due subjection, universal religious toleration was a steady maxim of the Venetian senate. The public and peaceable worship of the Mussulman, the Jew, the Greek, the Armenian, had always been equally permitted in the republican dominions; and in latter times even the protestant sects had met in the capital and provinces with a like indulgence. The iniquitous principles of the oligarchical administration forbid us from attributing to its conduct in these respects any higher or more enlightened motive, than the interested and necessary policy of a commercial state. But it is a striking proof of the ability and stern vigilance of this government, that, notwithstanding its universal toleration and rejection of ecclesiastical control, no pretence was left for the popes to impugn its zealous fidelity to the Romish church; and that, at a time when all Europe was convulsed by the struggle of religious opinions, Venice alone could receive into her corrupted bosom the elements of discord, without shaking the foundations of her established faith, or sustaining the slightest shock to her habitual tranquillity.

Intolerable pretensions of Paul V., steadily opposed by the Venetian government.

The fierce temper with which Paul V. seated himself on the papal throne, and the systematic determination of the Venetian senate to submit to no ecclesiastical usurpations, could not fail to

were thenceforth to enjoy the right of nomination, should be bestowed on Venetians only. The parochial ministers were always chosen by the householders in their cures.

CHAP. X. PART II. VENICE. 1600—1700

bring the republic into collision with so rash and violent a pontiff. Accordingly Paul V. had scarcely commenced his reign, when he conceived offence at the refusal of the senate to provoke a war with the Turks, by assisting the Hungarians at his command with subsidies against the infidels. His dissatisfaction with the republic was increased by her obstinacy in levying duty upon all merchandize entering the papal ports in the Adriatic:—a matter in which, assuredly, religion was in nowise interested; and it reached its height when the senate passed a law, or rather revived an old one, forbidding the further alienation of immoveable property in favor of religious foundations; which indeed even in their states were already possessed of overgrown wealth. *

At this juncture the council of ten, acting upon

* Daru has cited official and other documents to prove that, even in the states of the republic, notwithstanding the jealousy of the government, above a fourth and nearly a third of all territorial and immoveable property was already in the hands of the clergy, to the value of 30,000,000 of gold ducats. (Hist. de Venise, vol. iv. pp. 266, 292.) Venice alone contained above two hundred churches, monasteries, and other religious edifices; and these buildings occupied the half of the capital. They doubtless heightened the peculiar aspect and picturesque grandeur of Venice; but in a city, whose edifices were so girdled and bathed by the ocean, the enormous and increasing number of these religious houses in a circumscribed space was a serious evil; and the senate had long felt the necessity of restraining it, when they passed a law, of earlier date by two years than that mentioned in the text, prohibiting the erection of any new building for sacred purposes without authority of government. This edict was one of the grievances quoted by the pope.

its established principle of subjecting priests to secular jurisdiction, caused two ecclesiastics, a canon of Vicenza, named Sarraceno, and an abbot of Nervesa, to be successively arrested and thrown into prison, to await their trials for offences, with which they were charged. Their alleged crimes were of the blackest enormity: rape in the one case; assassination, poisonings, and parricide in the other. The pope, as if the rights of the church had been violently outraged by these arrests, summoned the doge and senate to deliver over the two priests to the spiritual arm on pain of excommunication; and he seized the occasion to demand, under the same penalty, the repeal of the existing regulations against the increase of ecclesiastical edifices and property. But the doge and senate, positively refusing to retract their measures, treated the papal menaces with the contempt which they deserved; and Paul V. then struck them, their capital, and their whole republic with excommunication and interdict.

Papal sentence of excommunication and interdict passed against the republic. 1606

The Venetian government endured his anathemas, so appalling to the votaries of superstition, with unshaken firmness. In reply to the papal denunciations of the divine wrath against the republic, they successfully published repeated and forcible appeals* to the justice of their cause,

* In this war of the pen, the republic had all the advantage with which the ability of an eloquent advocate could invest the justice of her cause. The senate had been careful to consult the most distinguished theologians of the Roman Catholic universities of Europe on the lawfulness of their pro-

and to the common sense of the world. The general sentiment of catholic Europe responded to their arguments; and their own subjects, filled with indignation at the unprovoked sentence against the state, zealously seconded their spirit. In private the doge had not hesitated to hold out to the papal nuncio an alarming threat, that the perseverance of his holiness in violent measures would impel the republic to dissolve her connection altogether with the Roman See; and the open procedure of the senate was scarcely less bold. On pain of death, all parochial ministers and monks in the Venetian states were commanded

Firm resistance of the senate to its operations.

ceedings, and they received unanimous opinions in their favor. On the other hand, several cardinals and Jesuits furiously engaged in the controversy on the papal side. But the pillar of the Venetian cause was Fra Paolo Sarpi, the celebrated historian of the council of Trent. This monk, whose strength of mind elevated him above the prejudices of his order, held the formal office of theologian to the republic, and fulfilled his duties with equal courage, zeal, and powers of argument. The bigots of the Romish church have therefore of course laboured to fasten on his memory the reproach of heresy, as a favorer of the reformed faith:—a glorious reproach if well founded, and if not at least a proof of his superiority to the exclusive and intolerant spirit of his creed. But the hostility of the papal party was not confined during his life to obloquy alone. Several attempts were made to assassinate him, and in one of these, even in the apparent security of his retreat at Venice, he received no less than twenty-three poignard wounds. The assassins escaped in a ten-oared boat; and the papal nuncio and the Jesuits were naturally suspected of being the authors of a plot, undertaken with such command of means and expensive precautions. The hurts of father Paul were not mortal; and preserving one of the daggers which the assassins had left in his body, he surmounted it with the appropriate inscription, " Stilo della chiesa romana.'

to pay no regard to the interdict, and to continue to perform the offices of religion as usual. The secular clergy yielded implicit obedience * to the decree, and when the Jesuits, Capuchins, and other monastic orders, endeavoured to qualify their allegiance, between the pope and the republic, by making a reservation against the performance of mass, they were immediately deprived of their possessions, and expelled from the Venetian territories.

Desire of the pope to have recourse to temporal arms.

The pope, finding his spiritual weapons ineffectual against the constancy of the Venetians, shewed an inclination to have recourse to temporal arms. He levied troops, and endeavoured to engage Philip III. of Spain and other princes in the support of his authority. At the same time, both the Spanish monarch and Henry IV. of France, the ally of the republic, began to interest themselves in a quarrel, which nearly concerned all catholic powers, and threatened Europe with commotion. In reality, both sovereigns aspired to the honor of being the arbiter of the difference. But the feint of arming to second the pope, by which Philip III. hoped to terrify the republic into submitting to his mediation, had only the effect of determining the senate to prefer the interposition of his rival; and Henry IV. became

* Only one exception to this obedience is recorded. The grand vicar of Padua alleged that he was inspired by the holy spirit to resist the commands of the senate. The podestá coolly replied that it might be so, but that the holy spirit had also inspired the senate to hang every refractory priest. The scruples of the vicar immediately vanished.

CHAP. X. PART II. VENICE. 1600—1700

the zealous negociator between the pope and the republic.

He is compelled to renounce his pretensions to procure an accommodation. 1607

Paul V. discovered at length that Spain had no serious resolution to support him by arms, and that, without the application of a force which he could not command, it was vain to expect submission from so inflexible a body as the Venetian oligarchy. He was therefore reduced to the most humiliating compromise of his boasted dignity. Without obtaining a single concession on the point in dispute, he was obliged to revoke his spiritual sentences. The doge and senate would not even receive an absolution; they refused to alter their decree against the alienation of property in favor of the church; and though they consigned the two imprisoned ecclesiastics to the disposal of Henry IV., they accompanied this act with a formal declaration, that it was intended only as a voluntary mark of their respect for that monarch their ally, and to be in no degree construed into an abandonment of their right and practice of subjecting their clergy to secular jurisdiction. Even their deference for Henry IV. could not prevail over their resentment and suspicion of the banished Jesuits: they peremptorily refused to reinstate that order in its possessions; and it was not until after the middle of the century, that the Jesuits obtained admission again into the states of the republic.

Signal triumph of the republic.

Thus, with the signal triumph of Venice, terminated a struggle, happily a bloodless one, which was not less remarkable for the firmness of the republic, than

important for its general effects in crushing the pretensions of papal tyranny. For its issue may assuredly be regarded, as having relieved all Roman Catholic states from future dread of excommunication and interdict:—and therefore from the danger of spiritual engines, impotent in themselves, and formidable only when unresisted.

Its good effects for catholic Europe.

Energy of the Venetian senate in maintaining their sovereignty over the Adriatic.

With the same unyielding spirit which characterized their resistance to papal and ecclesiastical usurpation, the Venetian senate resolved to tolerate no infringement upon the tyrannical pretension of their own republic to the despotic sovereignty of the Adriatic gulf. Before the contest with Paul V., their state had already been seriously incommoded by the piracies of the Uscochi.

The Uscochi—Origin of those pirates of Dalmatia.

This community, originally formed of Christian inhabitants of Dalmatia and Croatia, had been driven, in the sixteenth century, by the perpetual Turkish invasions of their provinces, to the fastness of Clissa, whence they successfully retaliated upon their infidel foes by incursions into the Ottoman territories. At length, overpowered by the Turks, and dispersed from their strong-hold, these Uscochi, or refugees, as their name implies in the Dalmatian tongue, were collected by Ferdinand, archduke of Austria (afterwards emperor) and established in the maritime town of Segna to guard that post against the Turks. In their new station which, on the land side, was protected from access by mountains and forests, while numerous islets and intricate shallows rendered it difficult of approach from the sea, the Uscochi

CHAP. X. PART II. VENICE. 1000—1700

Their incessant and bold depredations in the gulf.

betook themselves to piracy; and, for above seventy years, their light and swift barks boldly infested the Adriatic with impunity. Their first attacks were directed against the infidels; but irritated by the interference of the Venetians, who, as sovereigns of the gulf, found themselves compelled by the complaints and threats of the Porte to punish their freebooting enterprises, they began to extend their depredations to the commerce of the republic.

The Austrian government protect them.

It was to little purpose that the senate called upon the Austrian government to restrain its lawless subjects: their representations were either eluded altogether, or failed in obtaining any effectual satisfaction. The Uscochi, a fearless and desperate band, recruited by outlaws and men of abandoned lives, became more audacious by the connivance of Austria; and the republic was obliged to maintain a small squadron constantly at sea to protect her commerce against them.

Serious resolution at length formed by Venice to chastise them.

At length, after having recourse alternately, for above half a century, to fruitless negociations with Austria, and insufficient attempts to chastise the pirates, the republic seriously determined to put an end to their vexatious hostilities and increasing insolence. The capture of a Venetian galley and the massacre of its crew in 1615, and an irruption of the Uscochi into Istria, brought affairs to a crisis. The Austrian government, then directed by the arch-duke Ferdinand of Styria, instead of giving satisfaction for these outrages, demanded the free navigation of the Adria-

tic for its vessels; and the senate found an appeal to arms the only mode of preserving its efficient sovereignty over the gulf. The Venetian troops made reprisals on the Austrian territory; and an open war commenced between the arch-duke and the republic.

Consequent war with the house of Austria.

This contest was soon associated, by the interference of Spain, with the hostilities then carried on between that monarchy and the duke of Savoy in northern Italy respecting Montferrat. For protection against the enmity of the two branches of the house of Austria, Venice united herself with Savoy, and largely subsidized that state. She even sought more distant allies; and a league offensive and defensive was signed between her and the Seven United Provinces. Notwithstanding the difference of religious faith which, in that age, constituted in itself a principle of political hostility, the two republics found a bond of union, stronger than this repulsion, in their common reasons for opposing the Spanish power. They engaged to afford each other a reciprocal assistance in money, vessels, or men, whenever menaced with attack; and in fulfilment of this treaty, a strong body of Dutch troops arrived in the Adriatic. Before the disembarkation of this force, the Venetians had already gained some advantages in the Austrian provinces on the coasts of the gulf; and the arch-duke was induced by the appearance of the Dutch, and his projects in Germany, to open negociations for a general peace in northern Italy.

Alliance of the republic with Savoy and the Seven United Provinces.

CHAP. X. PART II. VENICE. 1600—1700

Conclusion of the war—The objects of Venice attained by the dispersion of the Uscochi, 1617

The same treaty terminated the wars of the house of Austria respecting Montferrat and the Uscochi. Ferdinand of Austria gave security for the dispersion of the pirates, whom he had protected; and thus the Venetian republic was finally delivered from the vexatious and lawless depredations of these freebooters, who had so long annoyed her commerce and harassed her subjects. It does not appear that the force of this singular race of pirates, who had thus risen into historical notice, ever exceeded a thousand men; but their extraordinary hardihood and ferocity, their incessant enterprises and activity, their inaccessible position, and the connivance of Austria, had rendered them formidable enemies. Their depredations, and the constant expence of petty armaments against them, were estimated to have cost the Venetians in thirty years a loss of more than 20,000,000 of gold ducats; and no less a question than the security of the dominion of the republic over the Adriatic was decided by the war against them.

and the assertion of her dominion over the Adriatic.

Exasperation of Spain against the republic.

Although Spain and Venice had not been regularly at war, the tyrannical ascendancy exercised by the Spanish court over the affairs of Italy, occasioned the Venetians to regard that power with particular apprehension and enmity; and the spirit shewn by the senate in the late contest had filled the Spanish government with implacable hatred towards the republic. By her alliances and her whole procedure, Venice had declared against the house of Austria, and betrayed

her disposition to curb the alarming and overspreading authority of both its branches in the peninsula. The haughty ministers of Philip III. secretly nourished projects of vengeance against the state, which had dared to manifest a systematic hostility to the Spanish dominion; and they are accused, even in apparent peace, of having regarded the republic as an enemy whom it behoved them to destroy. At the epoch of the conclusion of the war relative to Montferrat and the Uscochi, the duke d'Ossuna was viceroy of Naples, don Pedro di Toledo, governor of Milan, and the marquis of Bedemar, ambassador at Venice from the court of Madrid. To the hostility entertained against the republic by these three ministers, the two former of whom governed the Italian possessions of Spain with almost regal independence, has usually been attributed the formation, with the connivance of the court of Madrid, of one of the most atrocious and deep-laid conspiracies on record. The real character of this mysterious transaction must ever remain among the unsolved problems of history; for even the circumstances, which were partially suffered by the council of ten to transpire, were so imperfectly explained, and so liable to suspicion from the habitual iniquity of their policy, as to have given rise to a thousand various and contradictory versions of the same events. Of these I shall attempt to collect only such as are scarcely open to doubt.

Story of the famous conspiracy, at-

The Venetians had no reason to hope, that the exasperation of the Spanish government, at the

CHAP. X. PART II. VENICE. 1600—1700

tributed to the Spanish ambassador, for the destruction of Venice. 1618

part which they had taken in the late war in Italy, would die away with the termination of hostilities; and it appeared to the world a consequence of the enmity of the court of Madrid towards the republic, that the duke d'Ossuna, the viceroy of Naples, continued his warlike equipments in that kingdom with undiminished activity, notwithstanding the signature of peace. The viceroy, indeed, pretended that his naval armaments were designed against the infidels; and when the court of Madrid recalled the royal Spanish fleet from the coasts of Italy, the duke d'Ossuna sent the Neapolitan squadron to sea under a flag emblazoned with his own family arms. But it was difficult to suppose either, that a viceroy dared to hoist his personal standard unsanctioned by his sovereign, and would be suffered to engage in a private war against the Ottoman empire, or that he would require for that purpose the charts of the Venetian lagunes, and the flat bottomed vessels fitted for their navigation, which he busily collected. The republic accordingly manifested serious alarm, and sedulously prepared for defence.

Affairs were in this state, when one morning several strangers were found suspended from the gibbets of the square of St. Mark. The public consternation increased when, on the following dawn, other bodies were also found hanging on the same fatal spot, also of strangers. It was at the same time whispered, that numerous arrests had filled the dungeons of the council of ten with

some hundreds of criminals; and there was too certain proof that many persons had been privately drowned in the canals of Venice. To these fearful indications that the state had been alarmed by some extraordinary danger, the terrors of which were magnified by their obscurity, were shortly added further rumours, that several foreigners serving in the fleet had been poignarded, hanged, or cast into the sea. The city was then filled with the most alarming reports: that a conspiracy of long duration had been discovered; that its object was to massacre the nobility, to destroy the republic, to deliver the whole capital to flames and pillage; and that the Spanish ambassador was the mover of the horrible plot. Venice was filled with indignation and terror; yet the impenetrable council of ten preserved the most profound silence, neither confirming nor contradicting the general belief. The life of the marquis of Bedemar was violently threatened by the populace; he retired from Venice; the senate received a new ambassador from Spain without any signs of displeasure; and, finally, it was not until five months after the executions, that the government commanded solemn thanksgiving to be offered up to the Almighty, for the preservation of the state from the dangers which had threatened its existence.

Of the extent of these dangers, nothing was ever certainly known; but amongst the persons executed the most conspicuous was ascertained to be a French naval captain of high reputation

for ability and courage in his vocation, Jacques Pierre, who, after a life passed in enterprises of doubtful or piratical character, had apparently deserted the service of the viceroy of Naples to embrace that of the republic. This man, and a brother adventurer one Langlade, who had been employed in the arsenal in the construction of petards and other fireworks, were absent from Venice with the fleet when the other executions took place; and they were suddenly put to death while on this service. Two other French captains named Regnault and Bouslart, with numerous foreigners, principally of the same nation, who had lately been taken into the republican service, were privately tortured and executed in various ways in the capital; and altogether two hundred and sixty officers and other military adventurers are stated to have perished by the hands of the executioner for their alleged share in the conspiracy. The vengeance or shocking policy of the council of ten proceeded yet farther; and so careful were that body to bury every trace of this inexplicable affair in the deepest oblivion, that Antoine Jaffier, also a French captain, and other informers, who had revealed the existence of a plot, though at first rewarded, were all in the sequel either known to have met a violent death, or mysteriously disappeared altogether. Of the three Spanish ministers, to whom it has been customary to assign the origin of the conspiracy, the two principal were distinguished by opposite fates. The marquis of Bedemar, after the termi-

nation of his embassy, found signal political advancement, and finished by obtaining a cardinal's hat, by the interest of his court with the Holy See. But the duke d'Ossuna, after being removed from his viceroyalty, was disgraced on suspicion of having designed to renounce his allegiance and to place the crown of Naples on his own head; and he died in prison. *

* In no part of M. Daru's work has he used the advantages, which he has enjoyed in consulting an immense variety of unpublished manuscripts, with more industrious ability, than in his researches into the real character of the conspiracy of 1618. His enquiries have brought to light all the particulars of this mysterious transaction which can probably ever be known; and if he has failed in arriving at positive conclusions, future writers may assuredly despair of better success. Sufficient proof seems to be adduced that the duke d'Ossuna had seriously embarked in the project of raising himself to the Neapolitan crown; and that the Venetian and several other governments were acquainted with his designs, and secretly favored them. But this scheme of the viceroy, M. Daru justly argues, was incompatible with the part attributed to him in the conspiracy against the Venetian oligarchy. He therefore supposes the hostile countenance of the duke towards the republic to have been only pretended and collusive to veil the real purpose of his armaments from the Spanish court; and hence his apparent formation of the Venetian plot. In the issue, however, the apathy of the French court in withholding support from the duke, alarmed the council of ten for the consequences of their junction with him; and to avoid committing the republic with Spain, they resolved to extinguish every memorial of their connivance with his meditated rebellion, by treating the collusive conspiracy against themselves as real. If this explanation be admitted, the council of ten were guilty of a horrible sacrifice of some hundred lives to reasons of state; but this is consistent enough with their detestable policy. M. Daru's solution is at least ingenious, if it falls short of conviction; and without pronouncing upon so perplexed a question, I may observe that it is supported by

CHAP. X. PART II. VENICE. 1600—1700

Share of Venice in the other Italian wars of this century against the house of Austria;

Whether the safety of Venice had really been endangered or not by the machinations of Spain, the measures of that power were observed by the senate with a watchful and jealous eye; and, for many years, the policy of the republic was constantly employed in endeavours to counteract the projects of the house of Austria. In 1619 the Venetians perceived with violent alarm that the court of Madrid, under pretence of protecting the catholics of the Valteline against their rulers, the

very strong evidence, and offers the only plausible explanation of facts otherwise altogether contradictory and inexplicable. It does not of course exculpate the marquis of Bedemar; who, if not the contriver of the plot, certainly was led by the duke d'Ossuna to believe its existence; and who, believing it, shewed no displeasure at its dreadful purpose. Neither can I conclude with M. Daru, that Philip III. and the Spanish court stood necessarily acquitted of participation in the plot, of which it was the duke d'Ossuna's interest to make them credit the formation; and which, if they were acquainted with, they sanctioned. One point, M. Daru incontestably proves:—that the council of ten had intelligence of the conspiracy nearly a full year before they treated it seriously, and that their first informant was Jacques Pierre himself, a double traitor, who fancied he was betraying to them the duke his employer, and whom they subsequently hurried to death as a principal in the plot!

I shall only remark farther that, whatever may become of M. Daru's hypothesis, he has completely destroyed the authority of the Abbé de St. Real, on whose beautiful romance it has been the fashion to rely for the particulars of this celebrated conspiracy. He proves fictitious embellishment and falsification in every page of it; and henceforth its claims to belief must be classed with those of a superior monument of human genius for which it furnished the theme:—the tragedy in which Otway shewed himself inferior only to Shakspeare, for bold sketching of character, poignant felicity of dialogue, and striking dramatic situations.

protestants of the Grison confederation, was labouring to acquire the possession of that valley, which by connecting the Milanese states with the Tyrol, would cement the dominions of the Spanish and German dynasties of the Austrian family. The establishment of this easy communication was particularly dangerous for the Venetians; because it would envelope their states, from the Lisonzo to the Po, with an unbroken chain of hostile posts, and would intercept all direct intercourse with Savoy and the territories of France. The senate eagerly therefore negociated the league between these two last powers and their republic, which, in 1623, was followed by the Grison war against the house of Austria. This contest produced little satisfactory fruits for the Venetians; and it did not terminate before the Grisons, though they recovered their sovereignty over the Valteline, had themselves embraced the party of Spain.

The Grison war had not closed, when Venice was drawn, by her systematic opposition to the Spanish power, into a more important quarrel:—that of the Mantuan succession, in which she of course espoused the cause of the Gonzaga of Nevers. In this struggle the republic, who sent an army of 20,000 men into the field on her Lombard frontiers, experienced nothing but disgrace; and the senate were but too happy to find their states left, by the peace of Chierasco in 1631, precisely in the same situation as before the war; while the prince whom they had supported re-

terminated by the peace of Chierasco.

CHAP. X. PART II. VENICE. 1600—1700

mained seated on the throne of Mantua. This pacification reconciled the republic with the house of Austria, and terminated her share in the Italian wars of the seventeenth century. Her efforts to promote the deliverance of the peninsula from the Spanish power, can scarcely be said to have met with success; nor was the rapid decline of that monarchy, which had already commenced, hastened, perhaps, by her hostility. But she had displayed remarkable energy in the policy of her counsels; and the recovery of her own particular independence was at least triumphantly effected.

Remarkable recognition of her dominion over the Adriatic.

So completely were her pretensions to the sovereignty of the Adriatic maintained that, when, in the year 1630, just before the conclusion of the Mantuan war, a princess of the Spanish dynasty wished to pass by sea from Naples to Trieste, to espouse the son of the emperor, the senate refused to allow the Spanish squadron to escort her, as an infringement upon their right of excluding every foreign armament from the gulf; but they gallantly offered their own fleet for her service. The Spanish government at first rejected the offer; but the Venetians, says Giannone, boldly declared that, if the Spaniards were resolved to prefer a trial of force to their friendly proposal, the infanta must fight her way to her wedding through fire and smoke. The haughty court of Madrid was compelled to yield; and the Venetian admiral, Antonio Pisani, then gave the princess a convoy in splendid bearing to Trieste with a squadron of light gallies.

Little connection between the affairs of Venice and of the other Italian states, during the remainder of the century.

Throughout the remainder of the seventeenth century, the affairs of Venice had little connection with those of the other Italian states; and in tracing the annals of the republic, our attention is wholly diverted to the eastern theatre of her struggles against the Ottoman power. It was a sudden and overwhelming aggression, which first broke the long interval of peace between the Turkish and Venetian governments. Under pretence of taking vengeance upon the knights of Malta, for the capture of some Turkish vessels, the Porte fitted out an enormous expedition; and three hundred and forty-eight gallies and other vessels of war, with an immense number of transports, having on board a land-force of 50,000 men, issued from the Dardanelles with the ostensible design of attacking the strong-hold of the order of St. John. But instead of making sail for Malta, the fleet of the sultan steered for the shores of Candia; and unexpectedly, and without any provocation, the Turkish army disembarked on that island. The Venetians, although the senate had conceived some uneasiness on the real destination of the Ottoman expedition, were little prepared for resistance; but they defended themselves against this faithless surprise with remarkable courage, and even with desperation. During a long war of twenty-five years, the most ruinous which they had ever sustained against the infidels, the Venetian senate and all classes of their subjects displayed a zealous energy and a fortitude, worthy of the best days of their republic. But

Unprovoked attack of the Turks upon the republic. 1645

Long and disastrous war of Candia;

the resources of Venice were no longer what they had been in the early ages of her prosperity; and although the empire of the sultans had declined from the meridian of its power, the contest was still too disproportionate between the fanatical and warlike myriads of Turkey and the limited forces of a maritime state. The Venetians, perhaps, could not withdraw from the unequal conflict with honor; but the prudent senate might easily foresee its disastrous result.

The first important operation of the Turkish army in Candia was the siege of Canea, one of the principal cities of the island. Before the end of the first campaign, the assailants had entered that place by capitulation; but so gallant was the defence that, although the garrison was composed only of two or three thousand native militia, twenty thousand Turks are said to have fallen before the walls. Meanwhile at Venice, all orders had rivalled each other in devotion and pecuniary sacrifices to preserve the most valuable colony of the state; and notwithstanding the apathy of Spain, the disorders of France and the empire, and other causes, which deprived the republic of the efficient support of Christendom against a common enemy, the senate were able to reinforce the garrisons of Candia, and to oppose a powerful fleet to the infidels. The naval force of the republic was still indeed very inferior in numbers to that of the Moslems; but this inferiority was compensated by the advantages of skill and disciplined courage; and throughout the war the of-

fensive operations of the Venetians on the waves strikingly displayed their superiority in maritime science and conduct. For many successive years, the Venetian squadrons assumed and triumphantly maintained their station, during the seasons of active operations, at the mouth of the Dardanelles, and blockaded the straits and the port of Constantinople. The Musulmans constantly endeavoured with furious perseverance to remove the shame of their confinement by an inferior force; but they were almost always defeated. The naval trophies of Venice were swelled by many brilliant victories, but by five in particular: in 1649 near Smyrna; in 1651 near Paros; in 1655 at the passage of the Dardanelles; and, in the two following years, at the same place. In these encounters, the exploits of the patrician families of Morosini, of Grimani, of Mocenigo, emulated the glorious deeds of their illustrious ancestors; and their successes gave temporary possession to the republic of some ports in Dalmatia, and of several islands in the Archipelago.

marked by many glorious naval achievements of the Venetian arms.

But, notwithstanding the devotion and courage of the Venetians on their own element, and their desperate resistance in the fortresses of Candia, the war in that island was draining the life-blood of the republic, without affording one rational hope of ultimate success. The vigilance of the Venetian squadrons could not prevent the Turks from feeding their army in Candia with desultory and perpetual reinforcements of Janissaries and other troops from the neighbouring shores of the

Morea; and whenever tempests, or exhaustion, or the overwhelming strength of the Ottoman armaments, compelled the republican fleet to retire into port, the numbers of the invading army were swollen by fresh thousands. The exhaustless stream of the Ottoman population was directed with unceasing flow towards the scene of contest: the Porte was contented to purchase the acquisition of Candia by the sacrifice of hecatombs of human victims. To raise new resources, the Venetian senate were reduced to the humiliating expedient of offering the dignity of admission into their body, and the highest offices of state, to public sale: to obtain the continued means of succouring Candia, they implored the aid of all the powers of Europe. As the contest became more desperate, their entreaties met with general attention; and almost every Christian state afforded them a few reinforcements. But these were never simultaneous or numerous; and though they arrested the progress of the infidels, they only protracted the calamitous struggle.

Heroic and sanguinary defence of Candia.

In 1648 the Turkish army had penetrated to the walls of Candia, the capital of the island; and for twenty years they kept that city in a continued state of siege. But it was only in the year 1666, that the assaults of the infidels attained their consummation of vigour, by the debarkation of reinforcements which raised their army to 70,000 men, and on the arrival of Achmet Kiupergli, the famous Ottoman vizier, to assume in person the direction of their irresistible force. This able

commander was opposed by a leader in no respect inferior to him, Francesco Morosini, captain-general of the Venetians; and thenceforth the defence of Candia was signalized by prodigies of desperate valour, which exceed all belief. But we, in these days, are surprised to find that the Turks, in the direction of their approaches, and the employment of an immense battering train, shewed a far superior skill to that of the Christians. The details of the siege of Candia belong to the history of the military art; but the general reader will best imagine the obstinacy of the defence from the fact that, in six months, the combatants exchanged thirty-two general assaults and seventeen furious sallies; that above six hundred mines were sprung; and that four thousand Christians and twenty thousand Musulmans perished in the ditches and trenches of the place.

The most numerous and the last reinforcement received by the Venetians was six thousand French troops, despatched by Louis XIV. under the dukes of Beaufort and Navailles. The characteristic rashness of their nation induced these commanders, contrary to the advice of Morosini, to hazard an imprudent sortie, in which they were totally defeated, and the former of these noblemen slain. After this disaster, no entreaty of Morosini could prevent the duke de Navailles from abandoning the defence of the city, with a precipitation as great as that which had provoked the calamity. The French re-embarked; the other auxiliaries followed their example; and Morosini was left

with a handful of Venetians among a mass of blackened and untenable ruins. Thus deserted after a glorious though hopeless resistance which has immortalized his name, Francesco Morosini ventured on his sole responsibility to conclude a treaty of peace with the vizier, which the Venetian senate, notwithstanding their jealousy of such unauthorized acts in their officers, rejoiced to confirm. The whole island of Candia, except two or three ports, was surrendered to the Turks; the republic preserved her other possessions in the Levant; and the war was thus terminated by the event of a siege, in the long course of which the incredible number of 120,000 Turks and 30,000 Christians are declared to have perished.

Peace obtained by the republic by the cession of that island. 1669

Notwithstanding the unfortunate issue of this war, the Venetian republic had not come off without honor from an unequal struggle, which had been signalized by ten naval victories, and by one of the most stubborn and brilliant defences recorded in history. Although, therefore, a prodigious expenditure of blood and treasure had utterly drained the resources of the republic, her courage was unsubdued, and her pride was even augmented by the events of the contest. The successes of the infidels had inspired less terror than indignant impatience and thirst of revenge; and the senate watched in secret for the first favorable occasion of retaliating upon the Musulmans. After the Venetian strength had been repaired by fifteen years of uninterrupted repose and prosperous industry, this occasion of venge-

ance was found, in the war which the Porte had declared against the empire in 1682. An offensive league was signed between the emperor, the king of Poland, the czar of Muscovy, and the Venetians. The principal stipulation of this alliance was, that each party should be guaranteed in the possession of its future conquests from the infidels; and the republic immediately fitted out a squadron of twenty-four sail of the line and about fifty gallies.

New war of Venice, in concert with the empire, against the infidels. 1684

There appeared but one man at Venice worthy of the chief command:—that Francesco Morosini, who had so gallantly defended Candia, and whom the senate and people had rewarded with the most flagrant ingratitude. A strange and wanton accusation of cowardice was too palpably belied by every event of his public life to be persisted in, even by the envy which his eminent reputation had provoked, and by the malignity that commonly waits upon public services, where they have been unfortunate. But a second and unproved charge of malversation had been followed by imprisonment. Still, however, devoting himself to his country's cause, and forgetting his private injuries, Morosini shamed his enemies by a noble revenge; and, once more at the head of the Venetian armaments, he led them to a brilliant career of victory. The chief force of the Ottoman empire was diverted to the Austrian war; and the vigorous efforts of the republican armies were feebly or unsuccessfully resisted by the divided strength of the Musulmans. In the first naval

Victorious and brilliant career of the republican arms.

CHAP. X. PART II. VENICE. 1600—1700

campaign, the mouth of the Adriatic was secured by the reduction of the island of St. Maura, one of the keys of the gulf; and the neighbouring continent of Greece was invaded. In three years more, Morosini consummated his bold design of wresting the whole of the Morea from the infidels. In the course of the operations in that peninsula, the count of Königsmarck, a Swedish officer who was entrusted with the command of the Venetian land-forces under the captain-general, inflicted two signal defeats in the field upon the Turkish armies. Modon, Argos, and Napoli di Romania, the capital of the Morea, successively fell after regular sieges; the capture of Corinth completed the conquest of the peninsula; and Morosini, pursuing his triumphs beyond the isthmus, finally planted the banner of St. Mark upon the smoking ruins of Athens.*

Conquest of the Morea. 1687

After this uninterrupted course of victory, the republican arms were checked by an unsuccessful descent upon Negropont; where a pestilence broke out in the camp of the besiegers, and carried

1688

* The enthusiastic lover of art will consider these laurels of Morosini tarnished, by the ruthless destruction of some of the most precious monuments of antiquity. In six days, his artillery reduced Athens to flames and ruins; a shell from his batteries fell into the Parthenon, which the Turks had converted into a powder-magazine; and the shattered fragments of that beauteous temple are gloomy memorials, that the assaults of a civilized people may prove as fatal to the arts, as the ignorance and neglect of barbarians. It was after their victory, that the Venetians destroyed the famous statue of Minerva, the work of Phidias, in the attempt to transport it from its seat to their own capital.

off, among other victims, the count of Königsmarck, who had greatly distinguished himself in the preceding campaigns. The abandonment of this enterprise was followed by an equally fruitless invasion of Candia; and by another expedition, against the island of Scio, which was won and lost in the course of twelve months. A naval defeat occasioned this reverse; and though the superiority of the Venetian marine was afterwards redeemed by three successive victories over the Ottoman fleets, these encounters were all indecisive in their immediate consequences. At length, however, the republic found an honorable repose for her overstrained energies, which had been but too deeply impaired and exhausted by the length, and even by the victorious activity of the war. By the treaty of Carlowitz, which the republic, in concert with the empire, concluded with the Ottoman Porte, Venice retained all her conquests in the Morea (including Corinth and its isthmus), the islands of Egina and St. Maura, and some Dalmatian fortresses which she had captured; and she restored Athens and her remaining acquisitions on the Grecian continent.

The republic exhausted by her efforts.

Peace of Carlowitz. The Morea retained by Venice. 1699

Francesco Morosini did not survive to witness the glorious termination of the war, in which his achievements had repaired the disastrous issue of his earlier services. After the conquest of the Morea, the tardy gratitude of his country in some degree atoned for the treatment which he had suffered. He was raised by acclamation, on the first vacancy, to the ducal throne; and the jealous

senate, with a rare and merited confidence, united the continued command of their armies with his new and more illustrious office of doge. He sank under age, infirmities, and fatigue, in his seventy-sixth year, while still exercising his functions of captain-general in the Morea with unremitted zeal; and with him perished the last of the patrician heroes of Venice. *

* Sandi, Stor. Civ. Veneziana, bb. x. c. 11.—xii. ad c. 4. Daru, Hist. de Venise, bb. xxix—xxxiv. ad p. 169. (vol. v.) But Sandi has unconsciously injured the value of the part of his work which refers to the conspiracy of 1618, by implicitly copying the fanciful relation of St. Real, from whom he only differs when he is startled by the impossibility of reconciling some of the Frenchman's erroneous assertions with his own correct and intimate knowledge of the laws of his republic. But, with all Sandi's merits, I have found that Daru's researches into Venetian history have, in general, left me few facts of importance to glean from him or any other authorities.

CHAPTER XI.

STATE OF ITALY DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY; UNTIL THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE WARS OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, A.D. 1700—1789.

PART I.

Death of Charles II. of Spain—Extinction of the Spanish Branch of the House of Austria—Long Influence of that Event on the State of Italy—The Disposal of the Italian Provinces, regulated at the absolute Will of foreign Cabinets—Abject Condition and confirmed Degradation of the People—General Sketch of the shifting Aspect of the Peninsula, until the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle—War of the Spanish Succession—The Authority of Philip V. recognized in the Spanish Provinces of Italy—The Bourbon Cause at first supported by Victor Amadeus II. of Savoy—His Defection entails the Ruin of the Bourbon Interests in the Peninsula—Battle of Turin—Evacuation of all Italy by the French—Neutrality of most of the Italian Powers in this War—Ferdinand Charles, Duke of Mantua, ruined by the Reverses of his French Allies—Extinction of the House of Gonzaga—Peace of Utrecht—Montferrat acquired by Victor Amadeus; and Sicily also, with the regal Title—Naples, Sardinia, Milan, &c. assigned to the Empire—Short Period of Repose for Italy, interrupted by the Ambition of Cardinal Alberoni and of the Spanish Court—War of the Quadruple Alliance—Issue of the Contest—The Kingdom of Sardinia (in Exchange for Sicily) permanently assigned to the House of Savoy—The

*Crowns of the Two Sicilies re-united under the Empire—Peace of Italy for thirteen Years—Extinction of the ducal House of Farnèse at Parma—Their Duchy inherited by Don Carlos of Spain—Italy made the Theatre of the War of the Polish Election—Conquest of the Sicilies by the Spaniards—The Crowns of those Kingdoms received by the Infant Don Carlos—Peace of Vienna—Death of the Emperor Charles VI.—The furious War of the Austrian Succession fills Italy with Rapine and Havoc—Active Share taken in this War by Charles Emmanuel III., King of Sardinia—His skilful and artful Policy—Sanguinary Campaigns in northern Italy—Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle—The Independence of Italy, an Object of that Treaty—Its abortive Results upon a People without Patriotism or Virtue—Total Insignificance of Italian History during the long Peace between the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle and the French Revolution—Domestic Fortunes, &c. of the different Italian States in the eighteenth Century—Little separate Notice required for those of Lucca—Milan and Mantua,—Parma and Placentia.—*Naples and Sicily—*Reign of the Infant Don Carlos, over those Kingdoms—His laudable Efforts to promote their Welfare—His Errors—Succession of Don Carlos to the Spanish Crown (Charles III.)—Reign of Ferdinand IV. over the Sicilies—His Minority—His neglected Education—His Marriage—Authority engrossed by the young Queen—Rise of her Favorite Acton—His unlimited Influence.*

CHAP. XI. PART I.

Death of Charles II. of Spain. Extinction of the Spanish branch of the house of Austria.

The last year of the seventeenth century was marked by an event, which too surely foreboded the convulsion of Europe to its centre; and when the new age rose upon Italy, the political horizon of the peninsula was already darkened by the gathering tempest. The death of Charles II. of Spain extinguished the branch of the Austrian dynasty, whose sceptre had so long bruised the fairest provinces of Italy; and the people of Naples and Milan, of Sicily and Sardinia, with

mingled hope and anxiety, might anticipate either the amelioration of their fortune, or the aggravation of their miseries, by the contention of foreign pretenders. The succession to the vast states of the Spanish monarchy involved momentous political consequences for all the leading powers of Europe; but for the Italians the question was invested with fearful importance. It was vitally connected with their public and private happiness, with their future prosperity and virtue, with all the associations by which the nature of a government can influence the condition and the character of a people. Accordingly the dissolution of the gigantic fabric of despotism, which Charles V. had cemented, was felt in Italy, not only during the first shock of the war of the Spanish succession: it affected the general aspect of the peninsula, by the perpetual transfer of her states through foreign masters, for nearly half a century; and it was not until the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, that the assignment of her provinces was finally adjusted by the arbiters of Europe.

Long influence of that event on the state of Italy.

During this long period, the voice of the Italian people was never heard in the European cabinets, whose deliberations regulated their fate. Neither their wishes nor their interests, neither their affections nor even their most just and natural rights, were ever once regarded. To satisfy the conflicting pretensions of the royal houses of France, Spain, and Germany, to place the political system of Europe in that nice equilibrium,

The disposal of the Italian provinces regulated at the absolute will of foreign cabinets.

CHAP. XI. PART I.

which had become the favorite and exclusive object of the politicians of the eighteenth century, Italy was treated as a common spoil for the wholesale plunderers of the earth. The loveliest region of the universe was degraded into a general property for barter. Its beautiful provinces were carved and parcelled out by the sword and the law of expediency: torn into fragments to glut the craving ambition of the portionless children of monarchs: cast into the balance to adjust the scales of dominion, and to equipoise empires.

Abject condition and confirmed degradation of the people.

The power which the rulers of other nations thus exerted of rendering Italy, by universal consent, the sport and prey of their political game, could never indeed have been acquired, if her people had not already invited wrong and contempt by their spiritless degeneracy. But the vices, produced or deepened by the demoralizing consequences of tyranny, are no excuse for the perpetuity of oppression; and the statesmen of Europe, who made a mockery of Italian rights and independence, are heavily chargeable with having confirmed and completed the debasement of Italian character. During the eighteenth century, successive generations were habituated to see themselves repeatedly transferred, like the slave-population of an American estate, with the soil to which they were attached. All affection for their governors, all pride in their country, all desire of distinction by manly arts, was necessarily extinguished in their bosoms.

General sketch of the shifting aspect of the peninsula, until the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

If such be a correct picture of the condition and character to which the Italians had been reduced, there can be little either to interest or profit in the detailed study of this part of their history:—except in the general moral which may be drawn from their fate. Over the last division of the present work, we shall have even fewer temptations to linger, than over the annals of the two preceding centuries; and altogether abandoning the wish or the design to observe with minuteness the particular events of successive years, we shall pass with accelerated rapidity through the brief remainder of our subject. The wars, of which Italy was the scene in the first half of the eighteenth century, resembled those which had ravaged the peninsula in the age of Charles V.; in so far as they belonged to the individual history of other nations, or to the general history of Europe, rather than merely to that of the unhappy country, which formed only the arena of foreign contests. To other and more voluminous works, must it therefore be left to describe the operations of the European wars of the eighteenth century: it will be sufficient in this place, if we briefly collect and observe their consequences upon the political divisions and the dynasties of Italy.

War of the Spanish succession. 1701—1714

On the death of Charles II. of Spain, the publication of his unexpected testament, in favor of the second of the grandsons of Louis XIV. disconcerted all the projects of the European powers; who had already twice, during the last years of

CHAP. XI. PART I.

the feeble monarch, divided his vast dominions in anticipation among various claimants. When Louis XIV. resolved to support the title of his grandson to the inheritance of all the Spanish empire, he found at first no difficulty in securing the obedience of its Italian dependencies to Philip V. By directions from the Junta of regency, constituted at Madrid to await the arrival of the new king, the viceroys and governors of Naples, Milan, Sicily, Sardinia, and the state of the Tuscan garrisons, quietly placed all these kingdoms and provinces under the authority of Philip V. For the defence of these new Italian acquisitions of the house of Bourbon, Louis XIV. depended principally upon the aid of Victor Amadeus II. of Savoy, whose two daughters were now married to his grandsons: the one to the duke of Burgundy the presumptive heir of the French crown, the other to the new monarch of Spain.

The authority of Philip V. recognized in the Spanish provinces of Italy.

The Bourbon cause at first supported by Victor Amadeus II. of Savoy.

When, with the formation of the grand alliance between the empire, England, and Holland, against the house of Bourbon, the famous war of the Spanish succession commenced, the imperial arms made no serious impression upon Italy, as long as the duke of Savoy remained faithful to the French interest. But with Victor Amadeus, the ties of blood had far less influence than the dictates of selfish ambition. The extension of his dominions was the darling object of all his policy; and he was not slow to discover, that, if the issue of the war should leave Philip V. in possession of the Milanese, he must resign all prospect of swelling

his own territories, thus compressed between the states of the two branches of the Bourbon dynasty. With the hope perhaps of terrifying that house into the cession of Lombardy to him in exchange for Savoy,* he entered into negociations with the imperialists. But Louis XIV., apprehending his defection, ordered the duke de Vendôme, his general in northern Italy, to disarm the Savoyard contingent serving in his army; and Victor Amadeus, on the promise of large subsidies from England, and of some territorial advantages from the emperor, immediately changed his party, and joined the grand alliance.

His defection 1703

The defection of Victor Amadeus caused in the sequel the ruin of the French and Spanish affairs in the peninsula. The first consequences of his unscrupulous policy were however sufficiently disastrous to his own interests. All Savoy was conquered by the French; and Susa, Pignerol, and other fortresses of Piedmont, were likewise immediately reduced by their arms. In the following campaigns, after a course of uninterrupted successes over the Austrian and Savoyard forces, the duke de Vendôme overran all Piedmont; and

entails the ruin of the Bourbon interests in the peninsula.

* The Italian historians suppose such to have been the original motive of Victor Amadeus in his negociations with the imperialists; and certainly the duke appears to have taken no real precautions to prevent the secret of his intrigue from transpiring, or to place his troops in security, as it is natural to imagine from his general ability that he would have done, if he had seriously meditated a defection, before the rashness of Louis XIV. left him no alternative but to join the allies. (See Muratori, ad ann. and Denina, Rivoluzioni, b. xxiv. c. 1.)

CHAP. XI. PART I.

he finally laid siege to Victor Amadeus himself in his capital, with a formidable army of one hundred battalions of infantry and sixty squadrons of cavalry. This was the great crisis in the fortunes of the Italian war, and of the house of Savoy. Vendôme was vainly recalled from Piedmont to stem the victorious career of the British arms under Marlborough on the northern frontiers of France; and at this inauspicious moment for the French cause, Victor Amadeus, who had escaped with some cavalry from Turin, united himself with prince Eugene, who after receiving powerful reinforcements from Germany, was advancing to his relief. The French commanders imprudently awaited the approach of the allies in their lines before Turin; their army was totally defeated; and the loss of twenty thousand men was followed by the necessity of evacuating all Italy. The kingdom of Naples, which had been drained of troops to reinforce the French army of Lombardy, was invaded by an Austrian corps; and the authority of the arch-duke Charles, the brother of the emperor, and the rival of Philip V. in the Spanish succession, was peaceably recognized in the capital and provinces. All Lombardy and Piedmont were at the same time abandoned by the French under a convention signed at Milan; and the battle of Turin may be said to have terminated the war of the succession in Italy; for the peninsula remained untroubled by any farther hostilities of moment until the peace of Utrecht.

Battle of Turin. 1706

1707

Evacuation of all Italy by the French.

Most of the native governments of the peninsula

Neutrality of most of

the Italian powers in this war.

had endeavoured, by a strict and cautious neutrality, to avert the storm of war from their frontiers. The republic of Venice, the popedom, the grand-duchy of Tuscany, and other inferior states, sought only to avoid entanglement in a quarrel, from the issue of which their rulers had nothing to hope and every thing to dread. But all their efforts and protestations could not wholly prevent the occasional violation of their territories by the belligerents. They succeeded generally, indeed, in purchasing, by submission to insult and outrage, a safety which, however inglorious, was perhaps best suited to their weakness, and preferable to the certainty of greater evils. Besides the duke of Savoy, two only among the Italian sovereigns ventured to adopt a more perilous course; and the engagements of these princes with the great rival powers were attended with common misery to their subjects, but with very opposite results for themselves. Rinaldo of Este, duke of Modena and Reggio, embracing the imperial party, had been driven from his states and obliged to take refuge in the papal dominions, during the successes of the French. His conquered duchies suffered all the usual inflictions of military rapine and insolence; but they were restored to him on their evacuation by the French.

Ferdinand Charles, duke of Mantua, ruined by the reverses of his French allies.

On the other hand, Ferdinand Charles, the dissolute and contemptible duke of Mantua, had suffered himself to be seduced by the gold of Louis XIV. to admit a French garrison into his capital; and on the triumph of the imperialists, after the

CHAP. XI. PART I.

battle of Turin, Louis abandoned him, by the convention of Milan, to the mercy of the conquerors. An imperial sentence, passed against him at Vienna, had already declared him, as a feudatory of the empire, to have incurred the forfeiture of rebellion and felony by his alliance with the French king. His states were confiscated; Montferrat was assigned to the duke of Savoy; Mantua was annexed to the Milanese province; and Ferdinand Charles, after wandering through the Venetian provinces, a miserable pensioner of France, died in the following year. As he left no children, the sovereign line of the Gonzaga of Mantua terminated in his person. A junior branch of his house continued to reign over the petty principality of Guastalla, but was not suffered to succeed to his forfeited states; and the failure of that collateral line, a few years before the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, completed the extinction of the family of Gonzaga.

Extinction of the house of Gonzaga. 1708

Peace of Utrecht. 1713

The peace of Utrecht regulated the destiny of Italy; and though the new emperor Charles VI. refused at the time to accede to its provisions, the treaty of Rastadt, which he concluded in the following year with Louis XIV., made no change in any of those terms of the former pacification which related to the disposal of the Italian provinces. Besides cessions from France, which secured all the passes of the Alps, the duke of Savoy had acquired Montferrat and other territories, the promised reward of his alliance with the empire; and the union of these new possessions,

Montferrat acquired by Victor Amadeus, and Sicily also, with the regal title.

CHAP. XI. PART I.

which intersected Piedmont, with that great province and Savoy, completed the consolidation and security of his continental power. But Victor Amadeus gained a more brilliant, if not a more important accession of dominion. The island of Sicily was reserved for his share of the spoils of the old Spanish monarchy; and the acquisition of the insular kingdom entitled him to encircle his brows with the regal crown. The Bourbon sovereign of Spain was suffered to retain none of the Italian provinces. At the same time that he abandoned Sicily to Victor Amadeus, he yielded to the German branch of the house of Austria the remainder of the Spanish dominions in Italy. His former rival, the arch-duke Charles, thus annexed to the imperial and Austrian crowns, (to which he had lately succeeded by the death of his brother Joseph,) those of Naples and Sardinia, with the provinces of Milan, Mantua, and the Tuscan garrisons. *

Naples, Sardinia, Milan, &c. assigned to the empire. 1714

It was by the ambitious intrigues of an Italian princess and an Italian priest, that the repose of the peninsula was first disturbed, only four years after this pacification. Giulio Alberoni, the son of a peasant, and originally a poor curate near Parma, had risen by his talents and artful spirit to the office of first minister of Spain. Philip V., on the death of his queen Maria Louisa of Savoy,

Short period of repose for Italy, interrupted by the ambition of cardinal Alberoni and of the Spanish court.

* Muratori, Annali d' Italia, A.D. 1700—1714. Denina, Rivoluzioni d' Italia, b. xxiv. cc. 1—3. Coxe, History of the House of Austria, vol. iii. p. 404.—vol. iv. p. 146. (2d Ed.)

CHAP. XI. PART I.

had espoused the princess Elisabetta Farnése; and Alberoni, by means of this marriage, of which he was regarded as the author, enjoyed the favor of the new queen, and acquired an absolute ascendancy over the feeble mind of her husband. His first object was to obtain a cardinal's hat for himself; and being indulged with that honor by the pope, the next and more comprehensive scheme of his ambition was to signalize his public administration. To his energetic and audacious conceptions, it seemed not too gigantic or arduous an undertaking to recover for the Spanish monarchy all its ancient possessions and power in Italy, which had been totally lost by the peace of Utrecht. He duped the wily Victor Amadeus, and enlisted him in his views, by the promise of the Milanese provinces in exchange for Sicily; and the disgust, which the stern and haughty insolence of the imperial government had already excited in the peninsula, rendered the pope, the grand-duke of Tuscany, and other Italian princes not adverse to the designs of the Spanish minister.

But the great powers of Europe looked with far different eyes upon his inquiet ambition. The personal interests and feelings of the duke of Orleans, who now governed France during the minority of Louis XV., placed him in opposition to Philip V.; and the duke discovered a plot laid by Alberoni, through the Spanish ambassador at Paris, to deprive him of the regency of France, to which the cardinal persuaded his master to assert his claim as the nearest relative of Louis XV.

The intrigues held with the Scottish Jacobites by Alberoni, who had formed a chimerical scheme of placing the Pretender on the throne of Great Britain, and thus securing a new and grateful ally for Spain, rendered George I. as jealous as the duke of Orleans of the designs of the court of Madrid. For their mutual protection against the machinations of Alberoni, the British monarch and the French regent negociated a defensive league between Great Britain, France, and Holland, which, by the accession of the emperor to its objects, shortly swelled into the famous quadruple alliance.

1718

Besides the provision of the contracting parties for their mutual defence, the quadruple alliance laboured at once to provide for the continued repose of Italy, and to gratify the ambition both of the family of Austria and of the Spanish house of Bourbon. Although Parma and Placentia were not feminine fiefs, the approaching extinction of the male line of Farnése gave Elisabetta the best subsisting claim to the succession of her uncle's states. To the grand-duchy of Tuscany she had also pretensions by maternal descent, after the failure of the male ducal line of Medici; which, like that of Farnése, seemed to be fast approaching its termination. As, therefore, the children of the young queen were excluded from the expectation of ascending the Spanish throne, which the sons of Philip by his first marriage were of course destined to inherit, the idea was conceived of forming an establishment in Italy for don

CHAP. XI. PART I.

Carlos her first-born; and the quadruple alliance provided that the young prince should be guaranteed in the succession both of Parma and Placentia and of Tuscany, on the death of the last princes of the Farnése and Medicean dynasties. It was to reconcile the emperor to this admission of a Spanish prince into Italy, that Sicily was assigned to him in exchange for Sardinia. The weaker powers and the people were alone sacrificed. While the princes of Parma and Tuscany were compelled to endure the cruel mortification of seeing foreign statesmen dispose by anticipation of their inheritance, during their own lives, and without their option; and while, with a far more flagrant usurpation of natural rights, the will of their subjects was as little consulted; it was resolved to compel Victor Amadeus to receive, as an equivalent for his new kingdom of Sicily, that of Sardinia, which boasted not a third part of either its population or general value.

The provisions of the quadruple alliance were haughtily rejected by Alberoni, who had already entered on the active prosecution of his designs upon the Italian provinces. Having hitherto endeavoured, during his short administration, to recruit the exhausted strength of Spain, he now plunged that monarchy headlong into a new contest, with such forces as had been regained in four years of peace; and his vigorous, but overwrought direction of the resources of the state, seemed at first to justify his presumption. A

1717

body of eight thousand Spaniards were disem-

barked on the island of Sardinia, and at once wrested that kingdom from the feeble garrisons of the imperialists. In the following year, a large Spanish fleet of sixty vessels of war, convoying thirty-five thousand land-forces, appeared in the Mediterranean; and notwithstanding the previous negociations of Alberoni with Victor Amadeus, Sicily was the first object of attack. Against this perfidious surprise, the Savoyard prince was in no condition to defend his new kingdom; and though his viceroy at first endeavoured to resist the progress of the Spanish arms, Victor Amadeus, sensible of his weakness and inability to afford the necessary succours for preserving so distant a possession, made a merit of necessity, and assented to the provisions of the quadruple alliance. Withdrawing his troops from the contest, he assumed the title of king of Sardinia, though he yet possessed not a foot of territory in that island.

1718

War of the quadruple alliance. 1718—1720

Meanwhile the powers of the quadruple alliance, finding all negociations hopeless, had begun to act vigorously against the Spanish forces. Even before the open declaration of war, to which England and France had now recourse to reduce the court of Spain to abandon its designs, Sir George Byng, the British admiral in the Mediterranean, had not hesitated to attack the Spanish fleet, which he completely annihilated off the Sicilian coast. This disaster overthrew all the magnificent projects of Alberoni. The British admiral poured the imperial troops from the

CHAP. XI. PART I. 1719

Issue of the contest.

The kingdom of Sardinia (in c

Italian continent into Sicily; and the Spaniards rapidly lost ground, and made overtures for evacuating the island. The enterprises of the court of Madrid were equally unfortunate in other quarters; and Philip V., at last discovering the impracticability of Alberoni's schemes, sacrificed his minister* to the jealousy of the European powers, and acceded to the terms of the quadruple alliance.

* If Alberoni had succeeded in his daring and gigantic projects, he might have been remembered with Ximines and Richelieu and the Swedish Oxenstiern. But he failed; and posterity has seen in him only the superficial politician and the restless incendiary of Europe. Yet his active and original genius instructed him how to set in violent motion all the political springs of his times. The grandeur and extent of his views marked him for a statesman of no common mind; and before we condemn his schemes as altogether chimerical, it should be remembered that his hopes of recovering the Italian provinces for the Spanish house of Bourbon, were in a great measure realized in the sequel. In political virtue, his reputation has nothing either to gain or to lose by a comparison with many of the more fortunate idols of history. Such, however, was the general animosity which pursued him in his own times, that when he returned to Italy after his disgrace, he was compelled to bury himself in concealment. It was not until the conclave of 1721, that he ventured to appear at Rome and to take his seat in the papal college; but he afterwards filled several high offices under the Holy See, and was himself more than once on the point of obtaining the tiara. His restless spirit was incurable; he was papal legate in Romagna in 1739; and this man, says Voltaire, being no longer permitted to meditate the overthrow of empires, employed his leisure in endeavouring to destroy the petty republic of San Marino, too poor and insignificant to have ever before tempted human ambition. Pope Clement XII., to his honor, interposed his authority to protect the people of San Marino.—Alberoni died in 1752 at a great age.

Victor Amadeus was placed in possession of the kingdom of Sardinia, which his house have retained ever since this epoch with the regal title. The cupidity of the emperor was satisfied by the re-union of the crowns of the Two Sicilies in his favor; and the ambitious maternal anxiety of the Spanish queen was allayed, by the promised reversion of the states of the Medici and of her own family to the infant don Carlos. *

change for Sicily) permanently assigned to the house of Savoy.

1720

The crowns of the Two Sicilies re-united under the empire.

For thirteen years after the conclusion of the war of the quadruple alliance, Italy was left in profound and uninterrupted repose. The first

Peace of Italy for thirteen years. 1720—1733

* Muratori, Annali, A.D. 1714—1720. Denina, Rivoluzioni, b. xxiv. cc. 3—4. Coxe, House of Austria, vol. iv. pp. 162—171. Giannone, Istoria Civile del Regno di Napoli, the end of b. xl.:— the conclusion of the whole work, which breaks off with the events of the year 1722. In the frequent references which I have necessarily made to the great Neapolitan historian, I have borne testimony to the value of his labours, and have felt and echoed the common admiration of his boldness in exposing the encroachments of ecclesiastical power. But we have had abundant reason to observe, that his hostility to the audacious pretensions of the papacy was quite compatible with the support of the more flagrant abuses of temporal authority. When Giannone, therefore, has been upheld as the enlightened enemy of tyranny, his reputation has been grossly overrated. The whole tone of his sentiments is decidedly opposed to the cause of freedom; and in this respect the constitution of his mind seems to have been somewhat similar to that of Gibbon's. Both these celebrated historians, from whatever motive, thought the tyranny of a priesthood insupportable; but neither could find matter for reprobation in the most insulting excesses of any other despotism. For an example of the strain of servility to the reigning powers to which Giannone could descend, see c. 4. of his last book, in which he relates the accession of the emperor Charles VI. to the Neapolitan crown.

CHAP. XI. PART I.

half of the eighteenth century was completely the age of political chicanery; and the intricate negociations, which engrossed the attention and only served to expose the laborious insincerity of the statesmen of Europe, seemed to be ever threatening new troubles. But the treaties, which followed that of the quadruple alliance in thick succession for many years, had no other effect in Italy than to secure the Parmesan succession to the infant don Carlos of Spain. It was observed in the last chapter that Francesco and Antonio, the two surviving sons of the duke Ranuccio II. of Parma and Placentia, who died in 1694, had both inherited the diseased and enormous corpulence of their family. Neither of them had issue; the duke Francesco terminated his reign and life in 1727; and Antonio his successor survived him only four years. The death of the youngest of her uncles realized the ambitious hopes, which Elisabetta Farnése had cherished of conveying the states of her own house to her son. The male line of Farnése having thus become extinct, the youthful don Carlos with a body of Spanish troops was quietly put in possession of the duchies of Parma and Placentia, and reluctantly acknowledged by the last prince of the Medici, as his destined successor in the grand-duchy of Tuscany.

Extinction of the ducal house of Farnese at Parma. 1731

Their duchy inherited by don Carlos of Spain.

The final settlement of the Parmesan and Tuscan succession seemed to eradicate the seeds of hostilities in Italy; but it had become the unhappy fortune of that country to follow captive

in the train of foreign negociation, and to suffer and to bleed for the most distant broils of her foreign masters. Only two years had elapsed after the elevation of the Spanish prince to the ducal throne of Parma, when Italy was suddenly chosen as the field for the decision of a quarrel, which had originated in the disputed election of a king of Poland. Upon this occasion, the two branches of the Bourbon dynasty united in the same league against the house of Austria, and resolved to attack its possessions in Italy. Charles Emmanuel III., the new king of Sardinia, joined their formidable confederacy; and the imperial strength in the peninsula was crushed under its weight.

Italy made the theatre of the war of the Polish election. 1733

While Charles Emmanuel, at the head of the French and Piedmontese troops, easily conquered the whole Milanese states in a short time; the Spaniards at Parma, being delivered of all apprehension for the issue of the war in Lombardy, found themselves at liberty to divert their views to the south. A Spanish army of 30,000 men disembarked in the peninsula under the duke di Montemar, and joined don Carlos; and that young prince, at the age of seventeen, assuming the nominal command in chief of the forces of Spain in Italy, led them to attempt the conquest of the Sicilies. The duke di Montemar, who guided his military operations, gained for him a complete and decisive victory at Bitonto in Apulia over the feeble imperial army, which was entrusted with

Conquest of the Sicilies by the Spaniards.

CHAP. XI. PART I.

the defence of southern Italy. The opposition of language, and manners, and character, between the Germans and Italians, rendered the cold sullen tyranny of Austria peculiarly hateful to the volatile Neapolitans; and they eagerly threw off a yoke, to which time had not yet habituated them. The capital had already opened its gates before the battle of Bitonto; and the provinces hastened to offer a ready submission to the conquerors. The Sicilians imitated the example of their continental neighbours; and at Naples and Palermo don Carlos received the crowns of the Two Sicilies.

The crowns of those kingdoms received by the infant don Carlos. 1735

For the facility with which the Spaniards had effected these conquests, they were principally indebted to the powerful operations of the French in Lombardy, and to the vigour with which the armies of Louis XV. pressed those of the emperor in Germany, and prevented him from dispatching sufficient succours to his Italian dependencies. The court of Madrid now began to cherish again the hope of recovering the whole of the Italian provinces, which the Spanish monarchy had lost by the peace of Utrecht; and the duke di Montemar conducted his army into Lombardy to unite with the French and Piedmontese in completing the expulsion of the Austrians from the peninsula. But the emperor, discouraged by so many reverses, made overtures of peace; and the French cabinet was not disposed to indulge the ambition of Spain with farther acquisitions. Negociations

Peace of Vienna. 1738

for a general peace were opened, to which Philip V. was compelled to accede; and at length the confirmation of the preliminaries by the peace of Vienna once more changed the aspect of Italy. The crowns of Naples and Sicily were secured to don Carlos. The provinces of Milan and Mantua were left to the emperor; the duchies of Parma and Placentia were annexed to his Lombard possessions, to recompense him in some measure for the loss of the Sicilies; and the extinction of the house of Medici by the death of the grand-duke Giovan Gastone, while the negociations were yet pending, completed a new arrangement for the succession of Tuscany. Francis, duke of Lorraine, who had lately received the hand of Maria Theresa, the eldest daughter and heiress of the emperor, took possession of the grand-duchy, in exchange for his hereditary states; and Charles VI. was gratified by this favorable provision for his son-in-law and destined successor in the imperial dignity. Finally, the king of Sardinia, in lieu of the ambitious hopes with which he had been amused of possessing all the Milanese duchy, was obliged to content himself with the acquisition of the valuable districts of Tortona and Novara. *

This general accommodation among the arbiters of Italy procured only a brief interval of repose for the degraded people of the peninsula, before they were exposed to far greater evils,

* Muratori, Annali, A. D. 1720—1738. Coxe, House of Austria, vol. iv. pp. 172—312.

CHAP. XI. PART I.

Death of the emperor Charles VI. 1740

than those which they had suffered in the short course of the late war. The emperor Charles VI. died only two years after the confirmation of the peace of Vienna; and the very powers, who by that treaty had guaranteed the famous pragmatic sanction—or act by which the emperor was allowed to settle his hereditary states, as he had no son, upon his daughter Maria Theresa—conspired to rob her of those dominions. The furious war of the Austrian succession which followed, filled Italy during seven years with rapine and havoc.

The furious war of the Austrian succession fills Italy with rapine and havoc. 1741—1748

In the year after the death of Charles VI., a Spanish army under the duke di Montemar disembarked on the Tuscan coast to attempt farther conquests in Italy; and although these troops arrived to attack the territories of his consort, the new grand-duke was obliged to affect a neutrality and to permit their free passage through his dominions. On the other hand, the king of the Sicilies, who desired to aid his father's forces in their operations, was equally compelled to sign a neutrality, by the appearance of a British squadron in the bay of Naples, and the threatened bombardment of that city.

1742

This humiliation, to which the exposed situation of his capital reduced him, did not however prevent the Neapolitan monarch at a later period from taking part in the war. But his engagement in the contest had only the effect of drawing the Austrian arms into southern Italy, and inflicting the ravages of a licentious soldiery upon the neutral states of the church and the frontiers of Naples.

Active share taken in this war by Charles Emmanuel III., king of Sardinia.

But northern Italy was the constant theatre of far more destructive hostilities; and the Italian sovereign, who acted the most conspicuous part in the general war of Europe, was Charles Emmanuel III., the king of Sardinia. That active and politic prince, pursuing the skilful but selfish and unscrupulous system of aggrandizement, which had become habitual to the Savoyard dynasty, made a traffic of his alliance to the highest bidder. He first offered to join the confederated Bourbons; but the court of Spain could not be induced to purchase his adherence by promising him an adequate share of the Milanese states, which the Spaniards were confident of regaining. Charles Emmanuel therefore deserted the Bourbon alliance to range himself in the party of Maria Theresa. But it was not until he had extorted new cessions of territory from that princess in Lombardy, and large subsidies from our country which protected her, that he entered seriously and vigorously into the war, as the auxiliary of Austria and England. As soon as Charles Emmanuel began to declare himself against the Bourbon cause, his states became immediately the prey of invasion. Although the Spanish dynasty pretended to lay claim to the whole succession of the house of Austria, the real motive, which actuated the court of Madrid in these wars, was the ambition of the queen of Spain, Elisabetta Farnése, to obtain an establishment in Italy for another of her sons, the infant don Philip; and that prince, leading a Spanish

His skilful and artful policy.

Sanguinary campaigns in northern Italy.

CHAP. XI. PART I.

army from the Pyrenees through the south of France, over-ran and occupied all Savoy, which was mercilessly pillaged by his troops. But don Philip was unable to penetrate into Piedmont; and meanwhile the duke di Montemar, with the Spanish army already in Italy, had been opposed successfully by the Austrians and Piedmontese on the opposite frontiers of Lombardy.

1743

But Charles Emmanuel, even after he had formally pledged himself to England and Austria, was perpetually carrying on secret and separate negociations with the Bourbons; and it was only because he could not obtain all the terms which he demanded of them, and because he was also as suspicious of their ill faith as he was conscious of his own, that he maintained his alliances unchanged to the end of the war. His states were almost constantly the theatre of hostilities, equally destructive to his subjects, whether success or failure alternately attended his career. Yet he displayed activity and skill and courage, scarcely inferior to the brilliant qualities which had distinguished his father Victor Amadeus. When, however, the infant don Philip had been joined by the prince de Conti with 20,000 men, all the efforts of the Sardinian monarch, though he headed his troops in person, could not resist the desperate valour of the French and Spanish confederates; who forcing the tremendous passes of the Alps broke triumphantly into Piedmont, and for some time swept over its plains as conquerors. But reinforced by the Austrians, Charles Emma-

1744

nuel, before the end of the same campaign, turned the tide of fortune, and obliged the allies to retire for the winter into France. They still retained possession of the duchy of Savoy, and crushed the inhabitants under every species of oppression.

In the following year, Genoa declared for the Bourbon confederation; and the Spanish and French forces under don Philip, being thus at liberty to form a junction in the territories of that republic with the second Spanish army from Naples, the king of Sardinia and the Austrians were utterly unable to resist their immense superiority of numbers. In this campaign, Parma and Placentia were reduced by the duke of Modena, the ally of France and Spain; Turin was menaced with bombardment; Tortona fell to the Bourbon arms; Pavia was carried by assault; and don Philip, penetrating into the heart of Lombardy, closed the operations of the year by his victorious entry into Milan. But such were the sudden vicissitudes of this sanguinary war, that the brilliant successes of the Spanish prince were shortly rendered nugatory by a growing misunderstanding between the courts of Paris and Madrid, and by the arrival of large reinforcements for the Austrian army in the peninsula. Don Philip lost, in less than another year, all that he had acquired in the preceding campaign. He was driven out of Milan; he was obliged to evacuate all Lombardy; and the French and Spanish forces were finally compelled, by the in-

1745

1746

CHAP. XI. PART I.

creasing strength of the Austrians, to re-cross the Alps and to make their retreat into France. The king of Sardinia and his allies carried the war into Provence, without meeting with much success; and the French in their turn endeavoured once more to penetrate into Piedmont. But while that quarter of Italy was threatened with new ravages, the peninsula was saved from farther miseries by the signature of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. 1748

The independence of Italy, an object of that treaty.

One of the declared purposes of the European powers in their assembled congress was to give independence to Italy; and if that object could have been attained without the restoration of ancient freedom and the revival of national virtue among the Italians, the provisions of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle would have been wise and equitable. The Austrians were permitted to retain only Milan and Mantua; and all other foreign powers consented to exclude themselves from the peninsula. The grand-duke Francis of Lorraine, now become emperor, engaged to resign Tuscany to a younger branch of his imperial house. The throne of the Two Sicilies was confirmed to don Carlos and his heirs, to form a distinct and independent branch of the Spanish house of Bourbon; and the duchies of Parma and Placentia were elevated anew into a sovereign state in favor of don Philip, who thus became the founder of a third dynasty of the same family. The king of Sardinia received some farther accessions of ter-

ritory, which were detached from the duchy of Milan; and all the other native powers of Italy remained, or were re-established, in their former condition. *

Its abortive results upon a people without patriotism or virtue.

Thus was Italy, after two centuries of prostration under the yoke of other nations, relieved from the long oppression of foreigners. A small portion only of her territory remained subject to the empire; and all the rest of the peninsula was divided among a few independent governments. But after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, Italy was still as little constituted as before to command the respect or the fear of the world. Her people for the most part cherished no attachment for rulers, to whom they were indebted neither for benefits nor happiness; in whose success they could feel no community of interest; and whose aggrandizement could reflect no glory on themselves. The condition of Italy after the nominal restoration of her independence offers, as a philo-

* Muratori, Annali, A.D. 1738—1748. Coxe, House of Austria, vol. iv. p. 394—vol. v. p. 34.

Here we take our leave of the useful labours of Muratori, which terminate with the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. The earlier parts of his annals are a faithful abstract of the twenty-eight folios of original Italian histories; and whatever faults might be noticed in the general arrangement and execution of his prodigious work, our censure must be disarmed by the recollection, that it was undertaken and finished by a single man. I agree with Gibbon in thinking, that Muratori could not aspire to the fame of historical genius; and his modesty would be contented with the solid, though humble, reputation of an impartial and honest critic and an indefatigable compiler. See the antiquities of the House of Brunswick, Gibbon, Miscell. Works, vol. iii. p. 366, &c.

CHAP. XI. PART I.

sophical writer has well remarked, a striking lesson of political experience. The powers of Europe, after having in some measure annihilated a great nation, were at length awakened to a sense of the injury, which they had inflicted upon humanity and upon the general political system of the world. They laboured sincerely to repair the work of destruction: there was nothing which they did not restore to Italy, except, what they could not restore, the extinguished energies and dignity of the people. Forty years of profound peace succeeded to their attempt; and these were only forty years of effeminacy, weakness, and corruption:—a memorable example to statesmen, that the mere act of their will can neither renovate a degraded nation, nor replenish its weight in the political balance; and that national independence is a vain boon, where the people are not interested in its preservation, and where no institutions revive the spirit of honor and the honest excitement of freedom. *

Total insignificance of Italian history, during the long peace between the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle and the French revolution. 1748—1789

During these forty years of languid peace—from the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle to the epoch of the French revolution—the general history of Italy presents not a single circumstance for our observation; and it only remains for us to pass in rapid review the few domestic occurrences of any moment in the different Italian states of the eighteenth century. The affairs of the Sicilies, of the popedom, of the states of the house of

Domestic fortunes, &c. of the

* Sismondi, vol. xvi. p. 286.

different Italian states in the eighteenth century.

Savoy, of the duchies of Tuscany and Modena, and of the republics of Genoa and Venice, may each require a brief notice. But the obscure or tranquil fortunes of Lucca, of the Milanese and Mantuan provinces, and of the duchy of Parma and Placentia, would scarcely merit a separate place in this enumeration.

Little separate notice required for those of Lucca,

The Lucchese oligarchy continued to exist undisturbed and ingloriously.

Milan and Mantua,

The ancient duchies of Milan and Mantua, after the middle of the century, rapidly recovered from the perpetual ravages of the war of the Austrian succession; and the government of the imperial house of Lorraine (of that day at least,) deserved the praise of lenity and justice, in comparison with the previous oppression of the Spanish administration. By the dismemberment of a great part of its dependent territories, in favor of the house of Savoy, the city of Milan itself was shorn of much of the wealth and population, which had belonged to the capital of Lombardy. But the provinces, of which it remained the seat of government, were raised, by their own admirable fertility and the new influence of a more enlightened policy in their governors, to considerable prosperity; and when the French revolution violently interrupted the work of peace, the Lombard dominions of Austria, the only part of Italy under foreign government, gave some hope of improvement in literature, science, and public spirit, and formed certainly the most flourishing division of the peninsula.

CHAP. XI. PART I.

Parma and Placentia,

The duchies of Parma and Placentia, which had once more been separated from that of Milan to form the independent appanage of a Spanish prince, relapsed into the deep oblivion, from which the dispute for their possession had alone drawn them. Don Philip reigned until the year 1765; and his son and successor, don Ferdinand, occupied his throne beyond the period assigned to this work. The administration of both these princes was, in a political sense, marked by no important event; but the literary and scientific tastes of don Philip entitled him to be mentioned with respect, and shed some beneficial influence on his ducal states.

NAPLES AND SICILY. 1738—1759

The transition of the crowns of Naples and Sicily, from the extinguished Spanish branch of the house of Austria, to the collateral line of Germany, and from that dynasty again to a junior member of the Spanish Bourbons, has already been noticed; and we take up the annals of the Sicilies from the epoch only, at which the infant don Carlos was confirmed in the possession of their throne by the treaty of Vienna. This sovereign, who reigned at Naples under the title of Charles VII., but who is better known by his later designation of Charles III. of Spain, governed southern Italy for above twenty-one years. The general reputation of his character has perhaps been much over-rated; but, as the monarch of the Sicilies, he undoubtedly laboured to promote the welfare of his kingdom. The war of the Spanish succession paralyzed all his efforts dur-

Reign of the infant don Carlos of Spain over it.

His laudable efforts to promote their welfare.

ing the first half of his reign; but after the restoration of tranquillity in 1748, he devoted himself zealously and exclusively to the pacific work of improvement. He was well seconded by the virtuous intentions, if not by the limited talents, of his minister Tanucci. The principal error of both proceeded from their ignorance of the first principles of finance; and the cultivated mind and theoretical knowledge of Tanucci fitted him less for the active conduct of affairs, than for the station of professor of law, from which the king had raised him to his friendship and confidence. It has been objected as a second mistake of Charles or his minister, that the system of government which they adopted contemplated only the continuance of peace, and contained no provision against the possibility of war. No attempt was made either to kindle a martial spirit in the people, or to rouse them to the power of defending themselves from foreign aggression and insult. The army, the fortifications, and all warlike establishments were suffered to fall into utter decay; and the military force of the kingdom, which was nominally fixed at thirty thousand men, was kept so incomplete that it rarely exceeded half that number. The only security for the preservation of honorable peace at home was forgotten in a system, which neglected the means of commanding respect abroad; but Charles occupied himself, as if he indulged the delusive hope of maintaining his subjects in eternal tranquillity. He studiously embellished his capital; and the useful

His errors.

CHAP. XI. PART I. NAPLES AND SICILY. 1738—1789

public works—harbours, aqueducts, canals and national granaries—which preserve the memory of his reign, are magnificent and numerous. *

Succession of don Carlos to the Spanish crown. (Charles III.) 1759

The laudable exertions of Charles were but just beginning to produce beneficial effects, when he was summoned by the death of his elder brother, Ferdinand VI. of Spain, who left no children, to assume the crown of that kingdom. According to the spirit of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, his next brother don Philip, duke of Parma, should have succeeded to the vacant throne of the Sicilies; but Charles III. was permitted to place one of his own younger sons in the seat, which he had just quitted. His eldest son betrayed such marks of hopeless idiotcy that it was necessary to set him altogether aside from the succession to any part of his dominions; the inheritance of the Spanish throne was reserved for the second, who afterwards reigned under the title of Charles IV.; and it was to the third that the sceptre of the Sicilies was assigned. This prince, who under the name of Ferdinand IV. of Naples and Sicily has continued to reign to these times, was then a boy of nine years of age. Charles appointed a Neapolitan council of regency to govern in his son's name: but the marquis Tanucci remained the real director of the public administration; and the new monarch of Spain continued to exercise a decisive influence over the councils of the Two Sicilies during the whole of his son's minority, and even for some time after its expiration. It was by the act

Reign of Ferdinand IV. over the Sicilies.

His minority.

of Tanucci, and in conjunction with the policy of Charles, that the Jesuits were expelled from the Two Sicilies and from Spain at the same epoch; that the ancient usurpations of the Holy See were boldly repressed; * and that the progress of other useful reforms was zealously forwarded.

His neglected education.

It was the most fatal negligence of Charles III., and the lasting misfortune of his son, that the education of Ferdinand IV. was entrusted to the prince di San Nicandro, a man utterly destitute of ability or knowledge. The young monarch, who was not deficient in natural capacity, was thus permitted to remain in the grossest ignorance. The sports of the field were the only occupation and amusement of his youth; and the character of his subsequent reign was deplorably influenced by the idleness and distaste for public affairs, in which he had been suffered to grow up.

His marriage. 1768

The marriage of Ferdinand, with the princess Caroline of Austria, put a term to the ascendancy of Charles III. over the Neapolitan counsels. His faithful servant Tanucci lost his authority in the administration; some years afterwards he was finally disgraced; and the ambitious consort of Ferdinand, having gained an absolute sway over

* The ancient feudal superiority claimed by the popes over the kingdom of the Sicilies was not, however, altogether resisted until 1788. In that year the Neapolitan government finally withheld the annual offering of homage to the pope, and the present of a white palfrey and tribute, its symbols. (l'Art de verifier les Dates, vol. iii. p. 863.)

CHAP. XI. PART I. NAPLES AND SICILY. 1738—1789

Authority engrossed by the young queen. Rise of her favorite Acton.

the mind of her feeble husband, engrossed the direction of the state. Her assumption of the reins of sovereignty was followed by the rise of a minion, who acquired as decided an influence over her spirit, as she already exercised over that of the king. This was the famous Acton, a low Irish adventurer, who after occupying some station in the French marine, passed into Tuscany, and was received into the service of the grand-duke. He had the good fortune to distinguish himself in an expedition against the pirates of Barbary; and thenceforth his elevation was astonishingly rapid. He became known to the queen, and was entrusted with the direction of the Neapolitan navy. Still young, and gifted with consummate address, he won the personal favor of Caroline; he governed while he seemed implicitly to obey her; and without any higher qualifications, or any knowledge beyond the narrow circle of his profession, he was successively raised to the office of minister of war and of foreign affairs. The whole power of government centered in his person; and Acton was the real sovereign of the Sicilies, when the corrupt court and the misgoverned state encountered the universal shock of the French revolution. *

His unlimited influence.

* Orloff and Duval, Memoires, &c. sur le Royaume de Naples, vol. ii. pp. 138—171, &c. "Acton's rise," says Forsyth of him at a later period, "is not more astonishing than his keeping his ground. He first appeared in Tuscany as a barber. At the age of 60 he married a girl of 14, his bro-

ther's daughter or perhaps his own; for he was her mother's professed cecisbeo long before and after her birth. This child brought Sir John a child during my stay in Naples. An express went instantly to Caserta. The queen drove into town in the morning with presents to the lying-in lady. In the afternoon came the king, and made the new born babe a colonel." Vol. ii. p. 265.

PART II.

THE POPEDOM—*State of the papal Power and Dominions in the eighteenth Century—Universal Revolt of Europe against the papal Authority — Succession of Pontiffs — Benedict XIV. (Lambertini)—His enlightened and amiable Spirit—Clement XIV. (Ganganelli) — His Virtues and Accomplishments — Suppression of the Jesuits—Pius VI.—Unimportant Commencement of his calamitous Pontificate*—STATES OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY — *Their continual Aggrandizement — Victor Amadeus II.—His admirable domestic Administration—His Abdication—His vain Attempt to resume his Crown—Revolting Ingratitude of his Son—His Death—Reign of Charles Emmanuel III.—Wisdom of his Government—Victor Amadeus III.*—TUSCANY—*Sombre Reign of the Grand Duke Cosmo III. de' Medici—His vain Efforts to perpetuate the Existence of his House—His Death—Giovan Gastone, the last Duke of his Line—Reckless Dissipation of his Reign—His Death—Extinction of the sovereign Line of Medici—The Grand-duchy under the House of Lorraine—Government of the Emperor Francis I.—Beneficent Reign of Peter Leopold of Lorraine—His numerous Reforms—Prosperity of the Grand-duchy—He quits it to assume the imperial Crown—Ingratitude of the Tuscans—Total Cessation of the Work of Improvement* — MODENA — *Continued Decline of the House of Este—Long and calamitous Reigns of the Dukes Rinaldo, Francesco III., and Ercole III.—Approaching Extinction of their Line*—GENOA—*Share of the Republic in the War of the Austrian Succession—The City basely surrendered to the Austrians by the Senate—Intolerable Insolence and Exactions of the Conquerors—General Insurrection of the lower People against their foreign Tyrants—The Austrians driven with Loss and Disgrace from the City—Heroic Constancy of the People—The Oligarchy suffered to revive—Affairs of Cor-*

*sica—The People of that Island driven to revolt by the Tyranny of Genoa—Long Struggle of Genoa to recover her Dominions—Adventures of Theodore de Neuhoff, the ephemeral King of Corsica—The Senate of Genoa obtains the Aid of France—A Republic established in Corsica—Government of Paschal Paoli—The Sovereignty of Corsica ceded to Louis XV. by the Genoese Senate—Conquest of the Island by the French—*VENICE—*Weakness and final Decay of the Republic—Forced Neutrality of the State in the Wars of Europe—Re-conquest of the Morea by the Turks—Peace of Passarowitz—Venice falls into utter Oblivion—Relaxation of Vigour in the Venetian Despotism—Frightful Licentiousness of private Manners in Venice*—CONCLUSION.

State of the papal power and dominions in the eighteenth century.

THE papal history of the eighteenth century is marked by few circumstances of importance or interest. But the succession of pontiffs during this age is adorned with examples of moral excellence and even of intellectual accomplishments, which would have done honor to any of the temporal thrones of the world. The spectacle of personal worth in a Lambertini or a Ganganelli might almost reconcile the mind to the existence of an authority, which in their hands seemed to offer some atonement to insulted credulity for the usurpation and imposture of its foundations. But all the efforts of pontiffs, who were worthy in themselves of respect and esteem, could not correct the inherent vices of the ecclesiastical government, or arrest the fearful and rapid progress of desolation and decay in their states. In their relations with temporal powers, the popes were no longer permitted to domineer over the consciences of princes and the superstitious fears of

CHAP. XI. PART II. THE POPEDOM. 1700—1789

Universal revolt of Europe against the papal authority.

their people. *The most bigotted nations began* to spurn the degradation of blind submission to the Holy See; and the universal revolt of catholic Europe against the pretensions of papal jurisdiction had, for the interests of the popedom, all the fatal results of a new Reformation. In the eighteenth century, the successors of the Gregories and the Innocents of the olden time might deplore the causes, which had released the human mind from the trammels of superstition, and taught it to burst from the thraldom of their ancient influence. But they had at least penetration to discern the total change of circumstances; and, in general, they accommodated their measures with discretion and wisdom to the fallen fortunes of their See.

Succession of pontiffs

Pope Clement XI. who, as I observed in the last chapter, was placed in the chair of St. Peter in the last year of the seventeenth century, occupied his seat for twenty-one years. The proceedings against the Jansenists, to which he was in a great measure inveigled or compelled to give his reluctant consent, belong only to the history of France; but the share, which he was obliged to take in those religious disputes, was the circumstance that most embittered the happiness of his long pontificate. In Italy, too, the war of the Spanish succession filled him for several years with perpetual disquietude; and the strict neutrality, of which his weakness dictated the necessity, and which he wished to observe with scrupulous impartiality between the great rival

powers, could not shield his states from pillage and his dignity from outrage. Each of the candidates for the Spanish throne reproached him that he favored the other; and the Austrians, by the commission of every excess in the papal territories, after their victory at Turin, compelled him to annul the recognition of Philip V. as king of Spain, which the French had extorted from him, and to substitute the name of the arch-duke Charles in its place.

The death of Clement XI. in 1721 was followed by the elevation of Innocent XIII., whose unimportant pontificate lasted only three years; and, in 1724, Benedict XIII. was raised to the tiara. The name of this pope has acquired the reproach of fanaticism and superstition, by his publication of the ridiculous legend of Gregory VII.; and the blind confidence, which he placed in the infamous cardinal Coscia, exposed the Roman people to the intolerable rapacity and venality of that avaricious minister and his subaltern extortioners. Yet in personal conduct, Benedict XIII. was pious, meek, and charitable; and it was his advanced age and infirmities, rather than natural deficiency of understanding, which his subjects had cause to deplore. His successor Clement XII., who replaced him in 1730, and reigned ten years, was of very opposite character. He belonged rather to the class of popes who, in the two preceding centuries, had sacrificed their tranquillity in the vain endeavour to repress the growth of religious independence, than to that of the pacific pontiffs who

CHAP. XI. PART II. THE POPEDOM. 1700—1789

immediately preceded and followed him. He successively embroiled himself with the courts of Portugal, France, Austria, and Spain; and he shewed so little disposition to resign any of the absolute prerogatives of his See, that his pontificate was consumed in eternal and ineffectual contention. The European powers evinced an utter disregard for the assumed sanctity of his station; and at the close of the war of the Polish election, the Austrian army violated the neutrality of his states and lived at free quarters in the provinces of Romagna and Ferrara; while the Spaniards and Neapolitans plundered the environs of Rome and the patrimony of St. Peter. The papal subjects, notwithstanding the neutrality of his Holiness, were thus exposed to all the ravages of war.

Benedict XIV. (Lambertini.)

It was on the death of Clement XII. in 1740, that Prospero Lambertini, the most enlightened and virtuous of the Roman pontiffs, was raised to the tiara under the title of Benedict XIV.

His enlightened and amiable spirit.

This amiable man has been justly characterized as the first pope, who knew how to resign with dignity the extravagant pretensions of the Holy See. He immediately accommodated all the disputes, in which his predecessor had involved the papacy; he endeavoured to establish a wise economy in the administration of his states; and he acquired, by his tolerant and unassuming spirit, the esteem and veneration of all Europe. Yet the influence of his personal character, and the purity of his intentions, could not protect his subjects from insult and suffering, during the sanguinary

war of the Austrian succession. But after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, his efforts were unceasing to repair the ravages caused by the unprovoked violation of his neutrality; and his people had reason to deem his life too short, when it terminated in 1758.

The successor of Lambertini did not emulate his moderation. Clement XIII. evinced a laudable desire for the reform of manners, and for the correction of the clergy. But his zeal for the defence of the Roman Catholic faith was mingled with the rash and selfish design of re-establishing the papal power; and he was far from possessing the talents, the address, the persuasive manner, or even the firmness of Benedict XIV. He engaged, as Clement XII. had done, in fatal disputes with the Catholic princes, which only exhibited to contempt the imbecility of his spiritual authority; and like that pontiff he exposed himself and his dignity to cruel humiliations. He died in 1769, and it required all the conciliating policy of another Lambertini to calm the irritation, which his injudicious violence had excited among the great powers of Europe. The cardinal Lorenzo Ganganelli, who was placed at this critical juncture in the chair of St. Peter, under the title of Clement XIV., was eminently qualified for the difficult task of allaying the ferment, which his imprudent predecessor had provoked; and his wise and moderate conduct soon healed all the divisions of the Roman Catholic church.

Clement XIV. (Ganganelli.)

CHAP. XI. PART II. THE POPEDOM. 1700—1789

His virtues and accomplishments.

Regular but unostentatious in all the exercises of devotion; simple and unaffected in his manners; intellectual and philosophical in his tastes; humanity and temperance were the favorite virtues of this celebrated pontiff. He had cultivated them in the cell of a monastery; they did not forsake him on his throne; and they deserve the place which the chisel of Canova has assigned to them on his tomb. Of his own zeal for the arts, the foundation of the Capitoline Museum is a noble monument; but the most memorable political and ecclesiastical act of his reign was the suppression of the order of Jesuits. Before his elevation to the tiara, he had pledged himself to the courts of France, Spain, and the Two Sicilies, for the execution of this remarkable measure; and the later assent of the empress-queen Maria Theresa left him no excuse for delaying its consummation. The reluctance which he evinced to perform his promise, did not proceed from any affection to the proscribed order; but from personal apprehension of their vengeance. This solitary weakness of his elevated mind hastened him to the grave. After the act of suppression, he was haunted by perpetual fear of poison; his frame sank under the horrors of a diseased imagination; and he died of the effects of terror, acting upon a constitution already enfeebled by study and application to business. He was himself persuaded that he had been poisoned by the Jesuits; and the general hatred, which was en-

Suppression of the Jesuits. 1773

tertained at the time against the suppressed body, caused the accusation to be loudly echoed. But the charge was contradicted by the report of his physicians, and seems to have been wholly groundless. The long pontificate of Pius VI., who succeeded him in 1775, will not merit attention in this place; for the sufferings and humiliation of that unhappy and well-meaning pontiff,—the victim of foreign tyranny,—belong to a later period than is embraced in the present work.

Pius VI. Unimportant commencement of his calamitous pontificate.

STATES OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY. 1700—1789

Their continual aggrandizement.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, we have seen the power of the house of Savoy continually increased by the military and political talents of its princes, and by the consummate art, with which they accommodated their alliances in the wars of Europe to the selfish gratification of their personal ambition and interest. Victor Amadeus II. betrayed his ultimate views, when he compared Italy to an artichoke, which must be eaten leaf by leaf; and his son pursued his designs with similar fortune, and with equal or even superior address. Thus, at the peace of Utrecht, the acquisition of Montferrat and other important territories consolidated their continental states; and though Sicily was lost in the war of the quadruple alliance, the possession of Sardinia with the regal title was still no contemptible prize for the descendants of the counts of Maurienne. Thus, too, the issue of the war of 1733 added one considerable fragment of the Milanese duchy to Piedmont; and the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle tore another large district from

CHAP. XI. PART II. STATES OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY. 1700—1789

the Austrian provinces of Italy, and gave the kings of Sardinia the line of the Tesino and of lake Maggiore for their eastern frontier.

Victor Amadeus II.

His admirable domestic administration.

The able administration, by which Victor Amadeus II. and his son laboured to improve the resources of their states, was as remarkable as their energy and courage in the work of aggrandizement. After the peace of Utrecht, the former of those princes employed the sixteen remaining years of his long reign in strengthening his fortresses and army; in encouraging the progress of learning and intelligence among his subjects; in simplifying the administration of justice; and in fostering agriculture, commerce, and manufactures:—particularly those in Piedmont of silk and cloths. Victor Amadeus had received from nature a passionate love of system, and a remarkable capacity for detail. The equalization of the land-tax, which he commenced in his dominions, has often been cited as a model of financial arrangement. His wise measures in other respects had already doubled his revenues, without oppressing his people; and we may applaud the general principle, without inquiring into the particular policy, which stripped the feudatories of Savoy and Piedmont of their exclusive privileges, and subjected the noble order to the same burthens as the other classes of his subjects.

The protracted and brilliant career of Victor Amadeus had enchained the attention of Europe: the close of his life might exhibit to contempt the

mockery of human ambition. In some unexplained fit of caprice, the old monarch resolved to abdicate the regal crown and the throne of those dominions, which it had been the pride and labour of his years to acquire, to extend, and to improve. In an assembly of the ministers of state, the great functionaries of justice, and all the principal nobles of Sardinia, Savoy, and Piedmont, he solemnly resigned his authority, and transferred the allegiance of his subjects to his son Charles Emmanuel; and reserving to himself only an income suitable for a provincial nobleman, he chose for the place of his retirement the half-ruined castle of Chamberry, the ancient capital of the duchy of Savoy. He was accompanied to this retreat by a lady, the widow of the count di San Sebastiano, who had long privately been his mistress, and whom, having lately married, he now created marchioness of Spino.

His abdication. 1730

But he had scarcely lived a year in this seclusion, before he became completely weary of a repose, so different from all the tenor of his past life, and so unnatural to his restless spirit. His mind was irritated by the discovery—a discovery which history might have revealed to him earlier—that a monarch who dethrones himself offers only an allurement for ingratitude and neglect. His discontent was inflamed by the aspiring suggestions of his wife, who still cherished the hope of sharing a throne; and after removing to the castle of Moncalieri near Turin, he made a rash

His vain attempt to resume his crown.

CHAP. XI. PART II. STATES OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY. 1700—1789

effort to resume the reins of government. But his subjects remembered only his inquiet enterprises and his despotic temper, and forgot the later benefits of his reign. When he privately appeared at the gates of his capital, they were closed against him; and when his son, with a spirit which resembled his own, shamefully preferred the dictates of ambition to those of nature, no arm was raised to defend him. He returned in despair to Moncalieri; he was outrageously torn from his bed in the dead of night and hurried half-naked into rigorous imprisonment at Rivoli; and his wife shared a similar fate, and was at first separated from him. His son resisted his pressing solicitations for an interview, and never afterwards saw him. He was permitted to return to Moncalieri; and he died there, still in confinement, in the following year:—an example of the inextinguishable lust of power, and the victim of detestable filial ingratitude. *

Revolting ingratitude of his son.

His death. 1732

Reign of Charles Emmanuel III.

The active and warlike career of Charles Emmanuel III., until the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle gave final security and repose to his states, has been already noticed in the general affairs of Italy. After that pacification of Europe, he reigned in uninterrupted tranquillity for twenty-

* For a full and interesting account of these circumstances, compiled apparently from original documents, but with a tender and prudent regard for the sensitiveness of the reigning family of Sardinia, see the Memoires, &c. (vol. iii. pp. 131—154.) of Costa de Beauregard, before cited.

five years; and however the mind may revolt from his conduct as a son, we are bound to acknowledge that Charles Emmanuel III. was a great general, a great politician, a great and even a good king. After the termination of hostilities in 1748, he rivalled and surpassed his father in the wisdom of his administration. So much had the power of his house already increased before his last war, that at its commencement, fifteen days only after the declaration of hostilities, he was able to take the field at the head of an army of 40,000 of his native troops, highly disciplined and abundantly supplied with a train of artillery and pontoons, and all the matériel of scientific warfare. The leisure of his after years was employed in the admirable construction of a chain of Alpine fortresses, which might have proved an impregnable frontier for his states and for all Italy against the invasion of the French revolutionary armies; if those beautiful works had been defended with the same skill which constructed them; or if the son of Charles Emmanuel had inherited his unconquerable spirit and his eminent talents.

Wisdom of his government.

Nor were the labours of this active monarch confined to martial objects. He perfected the equalization of the land-tax and the compilation of laws, which his father had commenced: he built many splendid edifices of civil architecture; and he extended an enlightened and generous protection to men of science and letters. On his death, he was succeeded by his son Victor Ama-

Victor Amadeus III. 1773

CHAP. XI. PART II. STATES OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY. 1700—1789

deus III., a prince of inferior capacity; but who deserves to be mentioned with respect for his encouragement of literature and art, and his efforts to turn the pacific commencement of his reign to profit, by embellishing his states and bestowing on them a variety of useful establishments. Thus passed the first twenty-six years of his reign:—the storm of foreign war which clouded the evening of his life belongs not to our present subject. *

TUSCANY. 1700—1789

In the fortunes of the grand-duchy of Tuscany, during the age embraced in this chapter, we have already noticed the prominent circumstance: the extinction of the sovereign line of the Medici, and the assignment of their throne to a younger branch of the imperial house of Lorraine. The sombre reign of the grand-duke Cosmo III., during which Florence became the seat of fanatical superstition, may be said to have prepared the annihilation of his family. His unhappy disposition seemed to shed a withering influence upon whatever he attempted. Miserable in his own matrimonial connection, he was destined to inflict the curse of sterility upon every marriage which he anxiously negociated to perpetuate the existence of his house. He caused his two sons to marry: they had neither of them children, and the second separated from his wife. He gave his only daughter to the elector-palatine: she bore

Sombre reign of the grand-duke, Cosmo III. de' Medici.

His vain efforts to perpetuate the existence of his house.

* Muratori, Denina, passim. Costa de Beauregard, Memoires, &c. sur la Maison Royale de Savoie, vol. iii. pp. 56—302.

that prince no issue. Then, foreseeing with bitter certainty the extinction of his own posterity, but still clinging to the hope of preserving at least the duration of his family, he induced his brother, the cardinal Francesco Maria de' Medici, to abjure his vow of celibacy, and at an advanced age to espouse a princess of Gonzaga : but this marriage was not more fortunate than the others. Thus disappointed in every design of prolonging the existence of a dynasty, whose years were already inevitably numbered to their close, Cosmo III. sank into the tomb; but not before he had survived all the male heirs of his family, except his second son, Giovan Gastone.

His death. 1723

Giovan Gastone, the last duke of his line.

That prince who succeeded him was oppressed with infirmities, which confined him almost habitually to his couch. His life had hitherto been overclouded with gloom and wearisome disgust, by the austere and morose temper of his father, and by the hypocritical sanctity which Cosmo had brought into vogue at his court. The first care of Giovan Gastone, on his deliverance from the constraint in which he had lived beyond the age of fifty years, was to plunge headlong into the opposite extremes of extravagance and folly. His bed was surrounded by buffoons and flatterers, by rapacious menials and low-born favorites, who, so that they but amused his vacant idleness and beguiled him of the recollection of his infirmities, enjoyed the impunity to dilapidate and consume his finances by every species of embezzlement. Reckless of the future, and desirous only of clos-

Reckless dissipation of his reign.

ing his ears against the humiliating report of that diplomatic contest for his succession, which filled all the courts of Europe, he thought not of the miseries and wrongs of his people. He set no bounds to his profusion and the dissipation of their wealth; and when he died, his reign had inflicted many deep wounds on the natural prosperity of Tuscany. The death of his sister, a few years afterwards, completed the extinction of the sovereign house of Medici. A distant collateral branch of the same original stock, descended from one of the ancestors of the great Cosmo, was left to survive even to these times; but no claim to the inheritance of the ducal house was ever recognized in its members.

His death. 1737

Extinction of the sovereign line of Medici.

Francis of Lorraine, the consort of Maria Theresa of Austria, to whom this inheritance was assigned by the peace of Vienna, naturally resided little in Tuscany; and his elevation to the imperial crown seemed to consign the grand-duchy to the long administration of foreign viceroys. But the governors chosen by Francis were men of ability and virtue, who strove to ameliorate the condition of the people; and, on the death of the emperor Francis, his will, in consonance with the spirit of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, gave to Tuscany a sovereign of its own. This was his second son, Peter Leopold, to whom he bequeathed the grand-duchy, while his eldest, Joseph II., succeeded to his imperial crown.

The grand-duchy under the house of Lorraine.

Government of the emperor Francis I.

1765

Leopold was only eighteen years of age, when he commenced a reign, which exhibited to admi-

Beneficent reign of Peter Leopold of Lorraine.

ration the rare spectacle of a patriot and a philosopher on the throne. It may be true, as it has been asserted, that his actions were not always free from the taint of error and selfishness; for where are human motives to be found of unalloyed purity? But, that the ultimate and the dearest object of his heart, was to render his people happy, it is impossible to doubt. Among a multitude of useful labours, he fostered science and art; he encouraged agriculture, by bringing neglected lands into cultivation, by dividing them into a great number of little properties subject only to an easy rent, and by giving every cultivator a security and an interest in the produce of the soil; he promoted commerce by destroying all restrictions; and he left the people to raise in their own way the moderate supplies, by which his economy enabled him to support the administration and to discharge the public debt of the nation. He disbanded his army, as a pernicious and useless expence in a feeble state; and he trusted the safety of his person, at all times and under all circumstances, to the affection of a people, with whom he often mingled unknown, that he might observe their character and learn their wants. His reforms extended through the ecclesiastical establishment, the departments of state, the execution of the laws, and even through the manners of his subjects. And yet nothing was done rashly or in haste. He was a sincere friend to religion; but his zeal did not prevent him from introducing a commutation of tythes,

His numerous reforms.

Prosperity of the grand-duchy.

CHAP. XI. PART II. TUSCANY. 1700—1789

and subjecting church lands to the general burthens of the state. He banished the inquisition, and reduced the number of monks and nuns, by restraining the facility with which the monastic vows had irrevocably been sealed. He opened the offices of state to all ranks; he threw down all exclusions and forms of absurd etiquette in his court; and he introduced a perfect equality in judicial rights. Finally, he simplified the forms of justice; he abolished torture, corporeal mutilation, the pain of death, and the confiscation of property; and yet he knew how to diminish crime, and to render assassination unknown in his dominions.

Such were the acts by which this great and good prince left his practical virtues to speak by their results. The defects of his character—for nature is not perfect, and history therefore cannot be a panegyric—were too anxious a desire of interference in the minor details of government,* and too arbitrary a spirit in the enforcement of his favorite measures. He ardently desired the happiness of his subjects, but he resolved that they must be happy after his own ideas; and in his zeal to watch over the integrity of his ministers, he descended to the meanness of placing spies upon

* "Perhaps this activity was too meddling, too jealous, too constantly at work for a prince; perhaps he governed his states too much, and trusted the interests of his people too little to themselves; perhaps he left too often the mainspring of the political machine, to watch the action of the minutest wheels." Forsyth.

their actions, and gaining secret access to their papers by the use of false keys. His people were wearied of his vigilance, even in their own cause; and the machinations of the priesthood, and the depraved morals of the nation, often leagued to oppose his most salutary reforms. Thus when, after successfully devoting himself for twenty-five years to promote the prosperity of Tuscany, he was called to the imperial throne by the death of his brother Joseph II., he had too much reason to complain of the insensibility and ingratitude which secretly rejoiced at his removal. On taking possession of the Austrian states, in the year after the period to which this work is limited, he transferred the crown of Tuscany to his second son, Ferdinand Joseph. The total cessation of improvement in the state which he quitted might then afford one more proof, how fragile is the prosperity which the best administered despotism can confer: how short-lived the public rights, which depend on the duration of one man's virtues and power, and which are neither guarded by the spirit of the people, nor secured by a free constitution, against the malice or accidents of tyranny.*

He quits it to assume the imperial crown.

Ingratitude of the Tuscans.

Total cessation of the work of improvement.

The languid annals of the duchy of Modena during the eighteenth century will demand even

MODENA. 1700—1789

* Riguccio Galluzzi, Storia del Gran Ducato di Toscana, vol. vii. b. viii. c. 8—to the end of that work. Forsyth, Remarks, &c. on Italy, vol. ii. pp. 167—176: — a beautiful picture of the beneficent reign of Leopold in Tuscany, and a philosophical examination of his singular character.

Continued decline of the house of Este.

less of our notice, than those of Tuscany; since while they offer only a similar spectacle of the decay and final extinction of an ancient dynasty, their monotonous tale of public calamity is relieved by no fair interval of prosperity. I have mentioned that the duke Rinaldo of Este, who occupied the throne of Modena and Reggio when the new century commenced, entailed frightful misery upon his people by taking part in the war of the Spanish succession against the Bourbons. His subjects were horribly pillaged and ill-treated by the French during their successes: but the battle of Turin reinstated Rinaldo in his duchies; and the emperor, four years after the peace of Utrecht, rewarded his fidelity by selling to him the investiture of a third little duchy:—that of Mirandola, of which Charles VI. had deprived the noble house of Pico by confiscation. This accession of territory was, however, no recompense to the subjects of Rinaldo for their sufferings; and they smarted by a repetition of foreign oppression for his attachment to the house of Austria. In the war of the Polish election, Rinaldo, who had now attained a great age, was a second time obliged to fly and to abandon his states to the French and Spanish armies; by the peace of Vienna he was a second time reinstated in his capital; and he soon after died there.

Long and calamitous reigns of the dukes, Rinaldo;

1737

Francesco III.;

His son, Francesco III., who succeeded him, aggravated the misfortunes of his subjects by the display of a more warlike temper, of some talents for military command, and of more ambition for

CHAP. XI. PART II. MODENA. 1700—1789

personal distinction. He was thus induced (reversing his father's politics) to take an active part in the war of the Austrian succession against Maria Theresa; and he was driven from his territories, by her troops and those of the king of Sardinia. While he was obliged, with his little army, to share the fortune of the Bourbon standards, his states being over-run for the third time in fifty years, were devastated and pillaged; and his people were crushed under the weight of enormous contributions. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle at length restored his states to him, ruined by the depredations of the Austrians and Piedmontese, who had occupied them for several years; and he increased the general misery by his own exactions and ill regulated measures of finance. His reign was protracted to forty-three years, and he died at a very advanced age; but his patronage of Muratori and Tiraboschi,—both his subjects, and the most learned among the modern Italians—is the only circumstance which reflects any honor upon his otherwise inglorious and oppressive administration.

1780

and Ercole III.

Francesco III. was succeeded by his son, Ercole III., who was already in the evening of life when he assumed the ducal crown. It was the declining fortune of the house of Este to be represented by old men; and avarice is too often the vice of age. The two last dukes had been deservedly reproached with their exactions; and yet their rapacity might be remembered by their subjects for liberality and self-denial, in comparison with

CHAP. XI. PART II. MODENA. 1700—1789

the grasping extortions of Ercole III. The miser-prince thus accumulated an immense treasure which, when the hour of foreign danger arrived, instead of serving for his defence, only excited the cupidity and provoked the assaults of enemies. Ercole III. gave his only daughter in marriage to one of the Austrian arch-dukes; he had neither son nor male heirs; and before the convulsion of the French revolution shook him from his seat, he might already foresee the approaching and inevitable extinction of his line. *

Approaching extinction of their line.

The fortunes of the house of Este flowed in a parallel channel with those of Italy:—a stream, fierce and turbulent in emerging from its dark and far remote source; sparkling, resplendent and beauteous in its onward tide: languid, cold, and sunless in its later course; and finally losing itself, silent and unnoticed, in the ocean of time. The marquisses of Este displayed the blazonry of their nobility in the fields of Italy, long before the names of the Scala, the Carrara, the Gonzaga, the Visconti, the Medici, had broken forth from obscurity; and their descendants survived to witness the extinction of all these rival houses, and to perish the latest of the native dynasties of Italy. The story of the house of Este is connected, indeed, with the Italian annals, not by the support, but the destruction of Italian freedom; and the stern judgment of history will see little to applaud in the political career of its princes.

* Muratori, ad annos, passim. Sismondi, vol. xvi. pp. 318—321.

CHAP. XI. PART II. MODENA. 1700—1789

But to the scholar, the enthusiast of poesy, the passionate votary of art, the court of Ferrara is classic ground; the very names of the lettered princes of Este, unworthy patrons of brighter spirits though they were, are a talisman for awakening sweet recollections; and it is impossible to follow the last of this race of ancient lineage and high associations to their ignoble tomb, without some degree of interest, perhaps even, of regret.

Having brought down the annals of the various monarchies and principalities of the peninsula to the appointed period, and traced the fate of all the native Italian dynasties to their extinction; it only remains for us to devote our concluding pages to the affairs of those two ancient and rival states, which still preserved the vain image of republican government. Genoa and Venice still existed, and their existence was associated to the world with the memory of their departed glories: when kingdoms were their subject provinces, and foreign capitals their factories; when their sons fiercely struggled for the mastery of the waves, and the spoils of the east were poured into their laps for the dowries of their daughters. Genoa and Venice still existed; but they existed only in their monuments of extinguished greatness, and veiled their imbecility only under the lengthening shadows of names that had once been mighty.

GENOA. 1700—1789

Genoa, anciently the throne of a bold and untameable democracy, insolent as brave, and licen-

tious as free, had long become the quiet seat of a staid and imperturbable oligarchy. Severe and odious to the people, that sovereign body had bruised the head of the commonalty too effectually to dread any ebullition of the public hatred. During the first half of the eighteenth century, no event of interest or importance had marked the foreign relations of the republic,—except the insurrection of Corsica, which I shall presently notice; and no domestic transaction disturbed the repose and inglorious oblivion, which the senate desired for themselves and their state. In observing the nullity of the Genoese annals, which throughout this epoch offer no facts to merit our attention, it might have been imagined that all patriotism, all feeling against the stings of shame and tyranny, was utterly deadened and blunted in the people. But suddenly their domestic was exchanged for a foreign despotism; they were galled to the quick and goaded to desperation by brutal oppression; and then, in the midst of their degradation and decay, they proved that there had yet slumbered in their bosoms more than a spark of the generous fire, which had animated their forefathers. They charmed the attention and admiration of Europe by the last expiring and glorious burst of that hereditary spirit, once turbulent indeed, but nobly intolerant of servitude, and which two centuries of debasement had not been able utterly to extinguish.

Share of the republic in the war of

In the war of the Austrian succession, the Genoese senate had been induced to join the

Bourbon arms, because the king of Sardinia had espoused the opposite cause of Maria Theresa, and they dreaded his being permitted to seize the marquisate of Finale, to which they had some pretensions. The position of their republic rendered their alliance very acceptable to the French and Spaniards; and the empress-queen and Charles Emmanuel were enraged at their hostility in a commensurate degree. The efforts of the Genoese materially contributed to the success of the confederate Bourbons in the campaign of 1745; and the reverses of the following year left them exposed singly to all the vengeance of their exasperated enemies. The French and Spanish forces evacuated Italy, and retired, as we have seen, into Provence; they deserted Genoa to her fate; and while the Austrians and Piedmontese, their pursuers, appeared at the gates of the city, a British squadron blockaded the port. Terrified at their danger, the pusillanimous senate had no other thought than to capitulate; and the marquis Botta Adorno, the Austrian general, was suffered to take possession of the gates, without being even required to respect the honor and independence of the state or the property of the people. The senate engaged to surrender their troops as prisoners of war; to deliver up all the artillery and warlike stores of the republic; to send the doge and six of their body to Vienna to implore the pardon of the empress-queen; and to place four other senators in the hands of the Austrian general, as hostages for the fulfilment of these disgraceful conditions.

the Austrian succession.

The city basely surrendered to the Austrians by the senate. 1746

CHAP. XI. PART II. GENOA. 1700—1789

Intolerable insolence and exactions of the conquerors.

Botta Adorno was no sooner admitted into the city with 15,000 men, while the remainder of the Austrian and Piedmontese army encamped in the Genoese territory, than he began to take the most insulting and oppressive advantage of his success and of the pusillanimity of the senate. His exactions, and the rapine and insolence of his troops, exceeded all bounds; and yet they fell short of the tyrannical and revengeful commands of his court. In less than three months, he extorted contributions to the amount of 24,000,000 florins; he suffered his troops to commit the most brutal excesses among the citizens and peasantry; and he exiled many of the nobles. It was in vain that the senate strained every effort to satisfy his exorbitant demands; that the ancient national bank of St. George was drained of its treasures;* that the church plate and the valuables of private persons were put in requisition; that the degraded government toiled to discover fresh means of appeasing their foreign tyrants. The Austrian general and his troops multiplied their rapacities and their insults; until, swallowing up property and outraging every feeling of humanity, they left the miserable people

* The prosperity of this celebrated establishment, which had continued to the epoch before us to fill Genoa with vast returns of wealth by its foreign speculations, was thus utterly ruined. After the spoliations which its funds had sustained, by the forced loans required by the government for paying the contributions to the Austrians, its creditors endeavoured in their alarm to withdraw their property from its treasury. The bank of St. George was compelled to stop its payments; and this source of national riches was dried up.

literally nothing but life to lose. The indignant passions of the Genoese were thus naturally heated to the last stage of desperation; and it required but the slightest collision to fill Genoa with the flames of insurrection.

General insurrection of the lower people against their foreign tyrants.

At this juncture, a faint gleam of hope might break upon the goaded and suffering people, who still possessed courage to merit a better government than their degenerate oligarchy. The main Austrian and Piedmontese army passed on after their retreating opponents into Provence; Botta began to despatch part of the artillery from the arsenal, to assist them in the siege of Antibes; and a petty accident in the streets produced a general insurrection. In the removal of a mortar, its carriage broke down; a crowd was collected; an Austrian officer insolently struck a Genoese with his cane, who refused to assist in extricating the gun; and the long smothered hatred burst forth. The man boldly wounded the petty tyrant; the populace immediately assailed the Austrian party with a shower of stones; and the whole body of the lower people flew to arms. The numerous German garrison, confounded by the sudden revolt, attacked on all sides, entangled in the narrow streets of Genoa, and crushed under missiles from the housetops and windows, were overpowered and routed in detail. Their commanders, like themselves, were seized with a panic terror; the strength of the insurgents increased during the night; and every massive palace of Genoa was

CHAP. XI. PART II. GENOA. 1700—1789

The Austrians driven with loss and disgrace from the city.

converted by the people into a citadel. In less than twenty-four hours, the Austrians were driven with disgrace from the city, with the loss of 8000 men and all their artillery and matériel; and, finally, they were compelled to evacuate the whole republican territory. The gates of Genoa and the passes of the mountains were occupied and guarded by the citizens and peasantry; and the independence of the republic revived.

Heroic constancy of the people.

This glorious assertion of freedom deserves to be recorded as the work alone of the lower people of Genoa and its rural dependencies. Some few of the senators, indeed, had bravely directed the operations of the citizens, after the insurrection became general; but their body collectively had for some time neither the energy to assume the military guidance of the state, nor the courage openly to support the desperate resolution of their subjects. Even after the Austrians were finally expelled, and the populace had bristled the ramparts with artillery and armed themselves from the arsenals, the oligarchy endeavoured to disclaim to the council of state at Vienna all share in the insurrection; and it was only when they discovered that the Austrian government breathed nothing but vengeance, that they were driven to share the desperation of the people. They then solicited and obtained succours by sea from France; and several thousand French troops, under the duke de Boufflers, were introduced into Genoa to aid the citizens in the defence of

1747

the place. Thus, when the numerous Austrian and Piedmontese army, which had retired from Provence, forced the mountain passes and sat down before the walls, the courage of the Genoese and their allies set the formidable strength of their besiegers at defiance, and repelled all their attempts. When money was wanted, the ladies of Genoa voluntarily consigned their jewels to the public coffers; when provisions became scarce, the inhabitants endured hunger without a murmur; and though their fate was for some time doubtful, their resolution never slackened. At length they were relieved by a French army, which compelled their enemies to raise the siege; and in the following year the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle confirmed the recovered independence of the republic. But nobly and generously as the Genoese had saved their country, the fruits of the struggle were reaped only by the contemptible government whose cowardice had betrayed them; and the brave people, with miserable infatuation, suffered the feeble oligarchy again to rear its baleful head, and to lord it over their legitimate rights.

The oligarchy suffered to revive.

Affairs of Corsica.

After this tale of heroism in the people of Genoa, we must turn to contemplate the continued fruits of misgovernment in their rulers. The senate had wanted vigour to defend themselves and their republic; and their own oppression of the only colony which had remained to the state, was as grievous as that which they would tamely have endured from their own foreign

CHAP. XI. PART II. GENOA. 1700—1789

The people of that island driven to revolt by the tyranny of Genoa.

1730

tyrants. Sixteen years before the surrender of Genoa, the people of Corsica had been driven by the intolerable exactions of Pinelli, the commissary-general of the republic, and her other officers, into a general insurrection against her yoke. The insurgents, under a popular leader named Pompiliani, reduced Bastia and other places of importance; and the Genoese senate, finding their own forces inadequate to repress the universal revolt, were obliged to have recourse to the emperor Charles VI. The Austrian troops filled Corsica with flames and bloodshed: but they had failed in subduing the stubborn courage of the half civilized islanders, when the emperor recalled them to defend his own Italian dominions in the war of the Polish election; and the Genoese forces were then reduced to shut themselves up in their maritime garrisons.

Long struggle of Genoa to recover her dominion.

From that epoch, the war of Corsica was an open wound which continually drained the strength of Genoa. The senate vainly endeavoured, alternately by arms, by negociations, and by the most atrocious perfidy, to recover their authority. But against open hostilities the Corsicans were more than a match for their old masters; and every repetition of treachery only increased their exasperation, and their hatred of the Genoese yoke.

Adventures of Theodore de Neuhoff, the ephemeral king of Corsica.

At length the condition of Corsica tempted the wild ambition of a poor German baron, Theodore de Neuhoff, who had wandered an adventurer through several of the European courts. This man conceived the bold idea of making himself

king of Corsica; and one of the strangest caprices of fortune realized his aspirations. From Genoa itself, he opened a correspondence with some of the principal Corsican insurgents. He impudently boasted of his influence with most of the crowned heads of Europe; the simple Corsicans were easily duped; and when he appeared in the island with a few followers and some arms which he had inveigled the regency of Tunis to lend him, the islanders flocked to his standard. He was crowned with a wreath of laurel instead of a jewelled diadem, under the title of Theodore I.; he formed a court; instituted an order of knighthood; and for some time aped the part of royalty with ridiculous success. His adventures might fill volumes: but his indigence broke the vain dream of ambition; and after quitting his kingdom and roaming over Europe in fruitless efforts to raise supplies equal to his designs, he at last died a beggar in London.

1736

The senate of Genoa obtain the aid of France.

1738

Meanwhile the senate of Genoa, hopeless of reducing the Corsicans without foreign aid, had recourse to the king of France. Louis XV. for many years afforded them succours of men and money: but the former served only to give the French power a footing in the island; and the immense debts contracted by the republic to the French monarchy, contributed still more to prepare the way for the loss of a colony, in which every effort failed to re-establish an authority deservedly hated by the islanders. The war of the Austrian succession obliged the French to with-

CHAP. XI. PART II.

GENOA. 1700—1789

A republic established in Corsica.

draw their auxiliary forces from Corsica, as a preceding contest had compelled Charles VI. to discontinue his aid to the Genoese. A native republican government was established in the island; the Genoese, again assisted at intervals by France, continued their efforts; and the struggle proceeded for many years, until the celebrated Paschal Paoli at length appeared at the head of his countrymen. Though his reputation has been much exaggerated, Paoli wanted neither courage nor enlightened views to qualify him for his arduous situation. But when the French, after the close of the seven years' war, mingled again in the affairs of Corsica, first as mediators, and afterwards as hostile invaders; the difficulties which surrounded his administration, and divisions among the Corsicans themselves, rendered it, perhaps, impossible for him to avert the destruction of his government and the subjugation of the island.

Government of Paschal Paoli. 1755

The sovereignty of Corsica ceded to Louis XV. by the Genoese senate. 1768

The senate of Genoa, convinced of the hopelessness of recovering the dominion of their revolted colony, finally resolved to cede to Louis XV. the sovereignty which they could not retain. The French monarch gladly accepted so valuable an acquisition, as an indemnity for the immense sums which he had lent to the Genoese; and he caused himself to be proclaimed king of Corsica. Paoli and his islanders, although surprised, made an obstinate resistance to this usurpation; and Louis XV. expended much of the blood and treasure of his subjects in maintaining it. His troops

GENOA. 1700—1789

Conquest of the island by the French. 1769

were at the end of two campaigns even driven into the maritime fortresses. But at length the court of France seriously resolved on the reduction of the island; and the debarkation of a formidable French army decided the contest in two months. The timid, the wavering, the disaffected, deserted the cause of their country; Paoli was compelled to expatriate himself; and the Corsicans generally took the oaths of allegiance to Louis XV. *

VENICE. 1700—1789

Weakness and final decay of the republic.

The decline of Genoa had at least been relieved by one transient and brilliant example of popular courage: the last age of the Venetian republic presented only the silent and unbroken progress of corruption, and the irretrievable decay of political energies. After the close of the seventeenth century, Venice fell into utter oblivion and contempt; and her senate, whose successful maxim it had long been to conceal the weakness of their state under the appearance of a wise moderation, could no more disguise the secret of their impotence. The important conquest of the Morea, for which they had been indebted to the splendid abilities of Francesco Morosini, and to the temporary distraction of the Porte in its war with the empire, was absolutely the last worthy achievement of the republican arms; and the overstrained

* For the affairs of Genoa, as above, I have consulted Muratori, Annali, passim ad 1748 (particularly 1746 and 1747 for the Revolution.); Coxe, House of Austria, vol. v. pp. 4—12. for the same event; and the common authorities for the general state of the republic throughout the century.

CHAP. XI. PART II. VENICE. 1700—1789

efforts, by which it was dearly purchased, served only to hasten the moment of incurable exhaustion. The senate were more than ever, therefore, reduced to shun all participation in the contests of other powers; and they were prepared to endure every insult, rather than endanger the precarious existence of their state by vain appeals to hostilities.

Forced neutrality of the state in the wars of Europe.

In the war of the Spanish succession, the senate persisted in refusing to take any part; and they contented themselves with the endeavour to inspire respect for their neutrality, by forming an army of about 20,000 men in their Lombard provinces, and putting their fortresses into a state of defence. But when the French and imperialists in northern Italy alternately violated their territory in the most flagrant manner, the senate appeared insensible to these insults. Their spiritless forbearance was carried yet farther. The emperor fitted out some vessels of war at Trieste: a petty French squadron, penetrating to the head of the Adriatic, made captures of Austrian and Venetian shipping employed in transporting supplies to the imperial armies in Lombardy, and even burnt an imperial man-of-war in the Venetian port of Malamocco: and still these repeated infringements of the boasted sovereignty of the gulf, and of the dignity of the republic, were patiently endured.

By submitting to these degradations, the senate maintained their inglorious neutrality to the end of the war; but peace was scarcely restored in

Christian Europe, when their republic was assailed by a new and inevitable danger. They witnessed its approach with a blindness paralleled only by the insensibility which they had just exhibited: or rather, perhaps, they were still paralyzed by the same timidity, which had become habitual, to neglect every means of defence. The rumour of active and gigantic preparations in the arsenals of Constantinople could not rouse them to look to the security of their eastern dependencies; and when the sultan Selim III. suddenly broke the peace of Carlowitz without provocation, and directed a formidable armament by land and sea against the Morea, the Venetian troops in that peninsula did not exceed eight thousand men. The Turkish army of ten times that force broke through the isthmus of Corinth; that city and all the other fortresses of the Morea, which had been slowly won by the Venetians at the expence of so much blood and treasure, were able to make no effectual resistance; and in one short month the whole of the peninsula was conquered by the infidels. The alliance of the emperor with the Venetians diverted the efforts of the Turks, and saved the Dalmatian provinces of the republic from following the fate of the Morea. But in the third year of the war, a new and powerful Turkish armament made a descent upon Corfu. Notwithstanding the gallant defence of the governor,—the famous Saxon count de Schullembourg, who had entered the Venetian service—that island must have fallen, if the Turks had not been ter-

Re-conquest of the Morea by the Turks. 1714

1716

rified, by the reverses of their arms in Hungary, into a voluntary abandonment of their enterprise. It was with little effect that the feeble Venetian fleet was joined, as in former contests against the infidels, by a few gallies of the pope, the grand-duke of Tuscany, and the order of Malta, and received the partial aid of small Spanish and Portuguese squadrons: it was to little purpose that the republican navy shewed some remains of its ancient spirit. Two obstinate and indecisive combats could not retrieve the falling fortunes of Venice; and the senate were compelled to accept the terms of the peace of Passarowitz, by which the emperor preserved his own conquests at the expence of his ally. Venice was obliged to abandon the Morea to the Porte; and the same treaty finally adjusted the limits of her frontiers and those of the Ottoman empire. Of all her eastern dependencies, she now preserved only the seven Ionian islands, the coast of Dalmatia and part of Albania; and these, with her lagunes, and her continental provinces in Italy and Istria, composed her territories:—an extent of dominion which might still have given power and commanded respect, if the administration of the republic had not already been diseased and corrupt at its vitals.

1717

Peace of Passarowitz 1718

Venice falls into utter oblivion.

From this epoch, Venice fell from her place in history. Reduced to a passive and sluggish existence, her name ceased to be mingled in the political discussions, the alliances, and the wars

of the other states of Europe. Her commerce was annihilated; her manufactures dwindled so miserably that, in one branch alone, that of cloths, the annual fabrication fell from one hundred and twenty to five thousand pieces; her revenues did not supply the expences of her rapacious administration; and before the close of her career, her national debt had increased to 48,000,000 of ducats. Her naval force shrank to eight or ten sail of the line, a few frigates, and four gallies; * and while she remained neutral and powerless, her claim to the sovereignty of the Adriatic was contemptuously violated in every maritime war of the European powers. In like manner, her Italian dominions were insulted with impunity throughout the first half of the century, whenever Lombardy was the theatre of hostilities. About twelve thousand Italian, Sclavonian, and other adventurers constituted her only military force; and from a debased and heterogeneous population of above 3,000,000 souls, her government drew no means of public defence.

* One circumstance may illustrate the decay of maritime energy in the last ages of the republic. In the arsenal of Venice—which, in the time of Dante, was already the admiration of the world—the first ship of the line was built in 1624; and one hundred and fifty years later, the law still obliged the naval architects of the republic to build after the faulty construction and feeble scantling of the original model. In 1780 a few improvements were admitted; but when the French entered the city in 1797, some of the vessels which they found on the stocks had remained unfinished *for above fifty years*, for want of materials. Daru, vol. v. p. 292.

CHAP. XI. PART II. VENICE. 1700—1789

Relaxation of vigour in the Venetian despotism.

This hopeless decay of political resources, was accompanied by the reign of venality, peculation, and negligence in the provinces, and the palpable decline of vigour in the domestic administration of the capital. Whether this relaxation in severity in the government was itself the cause of the national weakness; or whether it was by that weakness that the oligarchy were taught to feel the necessity of conciliating the popular affection; the gloomy tyranny of Venice lost much of its energy during the eighteenth century. Originally constituted as it had been to restrain the power of the doge, to humble the pride even of the aristocracy from which it annually sprang, and to crush the licence of popular spirit, the removal of its pressure was calculated to loosen all the bonds of order in the vitiated state. Four times, during the last half of the century, was it attempted in the great council to abolish the jurisdiction and existence of the council of ten and of the inquisitors of state; and though the project as often failed by the want of union among the nobles, the boldness with which it was repeatedly introduced, and the moderation with which the standing tyranny used its victory, equally betrayed that the national sloth and imbecility had stricken even the most active and merciless of despotisms. Debauched, unprincipled, and needy, the aristocracy had desired the annihilation of every check upon their embezzlements and vices: the degraded people hailed their self-inflicted defeat in these

1761–1779

attempts with satisfaction, and rejoiced that a despotism yet remained, which reduced the nobles to a common slavery with themselves.

Frightful licentiousness of private manners in Venice.

The inactivity of that despotism was seized by all classes as a privilege for unbounded licentiousness and depravity of morals. Dissoluteness of private life had, indeed, ever been permitted by the council of ten, to corrupt the public mind and to divert its attention from affairs of state. The tyrants of Venice had trusted perhaps to their own energy, to supply the place of virtue and its attendant patriotism in the people. But their own vigour had fled; and the depravity of all classes had remained to increase with frightful intensity. It was then in vain that the government endeavoured to stem the tide of corruption in a city, where patricians presided at the public gambling tables in their robes of magistracy; where the miserable children of prostitution * were employed by the police to ruin men whose wealth might render them dangerous; where the laws protected the contracts by which mothers unblushingly made a traffic of their daughters'

* The government at one time, in a fit of virtue, expelled all the females of that unhappy class from Venice. But their absence only drove the licentiousness of society to indemnify itself in the interior of families, and even in the recesses of convents. The senate were then compelled to recall the proscribed order; and the parental decree which invited them back to Venice, and assigned them houses and pecuniary remuneration for their losses, entitled them in its preamble: "nostre benemeriti meretrici!" Daru, vol. v. p. 330.

CHAP. XI. PART II.

honor; and where, by the facility of divorce, the ecclesiastical court was besieged at the same moment with nine hundred petitions for the privilege of legalized adultery.*

CONCLUSION.

Such was Venice, when the wild deluge of the French revolution swept her from the political map of the world. But we are not called upon in this place to observe the total extinction of her political existence; nor to contemplate the final ruin of that government, which for thirteen hundred years had resisted all the convulsions of time. Yet he who has lingered over her chequered annals, will quit them at the epoch before us with a melancholy interest; for he will see only in her miserable fall the consummation of the long tragedy of Italy. And among a free, and happy, and intellectual people, that tragedy will speak with a deep-fraught and awful application. By Englishmen it should never be forgotten, that it is only the abuse of the choicest bounty of Heaven, which has brought a moral desolation upon the fairest land of the universe. That it is because the gifted ancestors of the Italian people consumed their inheritance of freedom in wanton and licentious riot; because they recklessly gave

* In this notice of the state of Venice during the eighteenth century, I have followed my old guide Daru alone: Hist. de Venise, vol. v. pp. 169—332. The Storia Civile di Venezia of Sandi during the same period, (or at least to the year 1768, when his work terminates) is insupportably uninteresting, and has scarcely furnished me with a single fact or opinion worth recording.

the reins to their untamed and fatal passions; above all, because, in the early cultivation and refinement of intellect, they forgot to associate it with virtue, and presumptuously neglected to hallow it by religion, that their descendants have come to this thing:—that they have been abandoned to the scorn and oppression of the despots of Europe, and have become a bye-word of mingled contempt and pity to the more fortunate nations of the universe.

THE END.

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